4
71

Ex Bibliotheca
Conventus Sti. Dominici

In Civitate Sti. Francisci

No._____

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

THEODICY.

VOL. II.

THEODICY:

ESSAYS ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE

BY

ANTONIO ROSMINI SERBATI

Translated with some omissions from the Milan Edition of 1845.

Ἀγαθος ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς
οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος.

—*Plato, in the "Timæus."*

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

VOL. II

BIBLIOTHECA CONVENTUS
ST. DOMINICI
in civitate

LONGMANS, GREEN & Co.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA
1912

Imprimatur :

ALOYSIUS EMERY,

Præp. Provinc. Inst. Char.

Nihil Obstat :

HENRICUS PARKINSON, S.T.D.

Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur :

EDMUNDUS CANONICUS SURMONT,

Vicarius Generalis

Westmonasterii, die 14 Augusti, 1911.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

——:o:——

BOOK THE THIRD.

(Continued.)

On the Law of the Least Means applied to the Government of Divine Providence.

CHAP.		PAGE
XII.	The Problem which Essential Wisdom had to solve in order to trace out the mode of operation to be followed by Essential Goodness	3
XIII.	The Principle to be followed in solving the Problem of the Wisdom that creates and governs the world .	9
XIV.	First Consequence:—When God can obtain a given quantity of good by the use of Created Entities and Activities, it is not fitting that He should obtain it by an extraordinary and immediate intervention of His Power	11
XV.	Continuation.—Necessity of Secondary Causes . .	14
XVI.	Second Consequence:—When God has by His Government obtained all the good He can obtain from all the Activities of His Creatures, it is in accordance with His Goodness that He should add His own immediate action, so as to produce in them and to derive from them that good which they, in whatever way governed, could not by themselves yield, maintaining, however, in the case of this Supernatural Action also, the Law of the Least Means. . .	16

CHAP.		PAGE
XVII.	Third Consequence:—Law of Excluded Superfluity .	29
XVIII.	Fourth Consequence:—Law of the Permission of Evil .	40
XIX.	Recapitulation, and connexion with what follows . .	56
XX.	Fifth Consequence:—It was fitting that God should place the beings He willed to create, in connexion with one another, so as to form of them a single harmonious whole	60
XXI.	Sixth Consequence:—It was fitting that the Universe should be ordered according to the Law of Continuity, or Gradation	78
XXII.	Seventh Consequence:—It was fitting that the Universe should be ordered according to the Law of Variety, in the Actuations and Modifications of beings . .	89
XXIII.	Continuation.—The Law of Wisdom has for its end the complete realization of the several species, not the multiplication of Individuals.—Law of Excluded Equality	98
XXIV.	Eighth Consequence:—Law of Unity in God's Action .	129
XXV.	Ninth Consequence:—It was necessary that the World should be governed in accordance with the Laws of Wisdom as expounded above, in order that there might result from it the Glory of God, the end for which the Universe was created	148
XXVI.	Continuation	186
XXVII.	Tenth Consequence:—God follows in His Action the Law of Heroism, that is to say, the Law of Extremes	200
XXVIII.	Continuation.—Law of Antagonism.	208
XXIX.	Continuation.—Issue of Antagonism	312
XXX.	Continuation.—Forces God brings together in the Conflict	329
XXXI.	Eleventh Consequence:—Law of Celerity is Action. .	356

CHAP.		PAGE
XXXII.	Twelfth Consequence:—Law of the Accumulation of Goods	371
XXXIII.	Thirteenth Consequence:—Law of Germ	389
XXXIV.	On the Absolute Measure of Good and of Evil	392
XXXV.	Of Providence in regard of the Good of Particular Individuals	412
XXXVI.	Conclusion	437
	Appendix A.	443

ON

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

BOOK III.

(Continued.)

ὑπερ-φυσικός

THE LAW OF THE LEAST MEANS APPLIED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

Ego SAPIENTIA—*quando præparabat cœlos, aderam; quando certa lege et gyro vallabat abyssos; quando æthera firmabat sursum, et librabat fontes aquarum; quando circumdabat mari terminum suum, et legem ponebat aquis, ne transirent fines suos; quando appendebat fundamenta terræ* CUM EO ERAM CUNCTA COMPONENS *et delectabar per singulos dies, ludens coram eo omni tempore, ludens in orbe terrarum:* ET DELICIÆ MEÆ, ESSE CUM FILIIS HOMINUM.

—*Prov.* viii. 12, 27–31.

ON
DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

BOOK THE THIRD.
(Continued.)

CHAPTER XII.

THE PROBLEM WHICH ESSENTIAL WISDOM HAD TO SOLVE IN ORDER TO TRACE OUT THE MODE OF OPERATION TO BE FOLLOWED BY ESSENTIAL GOODNESS. (1)

504. That the formula "The principle of the Least Means" is more accurate than "The principle of the Least Quantity of Action," is evident from this, that the word *means*, corresponding with the word *end*, shows that the *minimum* which is aimed at is a relative *minimum;* whereas by saying, "The Least Quantity of

(1) It is not necessary to remind the reader that, in speaking of the operations of the Divine Mind, we make use of human, and therefore, inadequate language, because we have none more suitable. Of course, the Divine Intelligence knows all things by one sole act, without any succession of thoughts or reasoning, and has no need, as we have, on account of the limitation of our faculties, of solving problems in order to arrive at a conclusion.

Action" it seems that an absolute *minimum* is indicated. Hence in the universe we can always say that the least means is used for producing the effect intended; but we cannot always say that the least action is used, unless by changing the meaning of the expression, namely, by taking in each different case a different rule for measuring the quantity of the action. Indeed, if we always insisted on measuring the quantity of the action by the principle of Maupertuis, "Space multiplied by velocity," we should often find ourselves mistaken. It is true that in many of the movements which take place in the universe we notice a saving both of space and velocity, so that nature would then seem to aim at rendering the motion gentle and free from violence; but it is also true that in many a case it seems to aim at the very reverse, as for instance in the muscular movements (501), and then *force* is the thing economized. At other times what nature appears to propose to itself is the obtaining of as much motion as possible by a saving of time, force, and obstacles. In short, the *means* is invariably what nature economizes in working for the end proposed; and that end varies according to need.

505. Nor does this variation of end afford any ground for saying that nature is in contradiction with itself, if we consider what has been said above. We observed that so long as there is question of matter, of sensitivity, in one word, of all that constitutes *real being as separated from intelligence*, no true end can be found, and therefore, no principle of the least means. There can only be found forces and energies which produce what they must produce, neither more nor less; hence, there can be no room for either *maximum* or

minimum. But if intelligence comes in, and wishes to obtain a certain effect from nature, then it can propose to itself that effect as an end, and can find out the best means of obtaining it. Now, if we speak of particular ends, intelligence can propose to itself a variety of them, and very often one opposed to the other. Thus (not to leave the sphere of material nature) it will propose to itself sometimes the collocation of a body in a given place, sometimes rapidity, sometimes quantity of motion, sometimes ease or uniformity in the movements, sometimes a given form, etc.; and it will seek the means relative to each of these ends, and often find them either in the forces of nature, or in an artificial distribution and combination of them. The truth therefore is, not that real nature itself changes its ends, but that intelligence considers the operation of nature partially under different relations, now, in order to one effect which it singles out for itself, and now in order to another contrary effect. Human intelligence is moved to this by the need it happens to have of those particular contrary ends for securing a higher purpose, that of its own satisfaction. And if we observe that the forces of material nature are distributed in the universe so as to bring about the said effects in the easiest and simplest way, namely, by the use of the least means, this is a manifest proof that a Supreme Intelligence has given to the forces and parts of nature the marvellous distribution and combination of which we speak.

506. But now our argument must take a much higher range, in accordance with the object of these discussions, which is to consider the end contemplated by Divine Providence, and to show that that end is

obtained by the least means, which is the inviolable law of Wisdom and of Goodness.

By the end contemplated by Divine Providence, we mean here the ultimate end, consisting in the *greatest moral perfection of intelligent creatures*, and in that which is its consequence, *their greatest eudemonological good*, or greatest happiness. For, as we have seen, intelligent-moral being cannot have for itself any other end than intelligent-moral being, and the good of that being; nor can anything else be a *sufficient reason* for its action. This good forms the absolute and universal end. All the other ends are relative and partial; that is to say, in relation to it they are nothing but means.

The question, therefore, is: "To define the quantity of moral perfection and happiness it behoved God to communicate to His creatures in order to prove Himself supremely good."

We have already seen that this *quantum* of moral-eudemonological good could not have been infinite, because no creature could be infinite (491). But its amount though finite (and supposing no other conditions to be added to the problem), might have increased indefinitely according to God's good pleasure.

It remains for us, however, to see if there were no other condition, no other application of the principle of the Least Means, limiting that finite quantity; for, otherwise, the said quantity would remain indefinite, or capable of being increased indefinitely.

In fact, it is inconceivable that the Divine Goodness, being by its nature infinite, could stop at a given measure of beneficence, unless Wisdom placed a limit thereto; in which case the limit would not lessen the Goodness, but rather perfect and complete it. Never-

theless, there would be a diminution in the absolute quantity of external effect, to make room for an increased relative quantity, that is to say, a quantity the greatest possible relatively to the means employed.

This at last enables us to see what was the problem that had to be solved by Divine Wisdom in order to trace out the way to be pursued by Divine Goodness in its operation. It was the following: "To determine the quantity of moral-eudemonological good to be distributed by the Creator among His creatures, in order that this quantity might be the greatest possible relatively to the means employed in producing it." For, if in the universe the good produced were the greatest possible, and the means the least possible, the universe would be perfect, and an Infinite Goodness could not have framed anything better.

507. Hence it follows, that if, to constitute such a universe as is here described, the sins of men and the loss of the reprobate were seen by God to be indispensable, these evils, far from telling against the supreme goodness of the Creator, would manifestly be a corroboration of it.

Now, as we have seen, there is nothing to show that what is here supposed is an impossibility; and this sufficed as an answer to the objections against Divine Providence. For, if it is not impossible, we must assume that the Supreme Being has acted in the manner we have supposed, and framed the universe such as we have described it. For if we did not assume this, we should be bound to demonstrate either that God does not exist, or, if He exists, that He does not act in a way conformable to His Divine attributes; both things equally absurd. To

call into doubt the existence of God, supported as it is by so many other proofs, would require nothing short of a *rigorous demonstration* that moral and eudemonological evils can have no place in that one among the possible worlds which, being wholly governed by the Law of the Least Means is, for this very reason, a work of Supreme Wisdom and Goodness. If, therefore, no such demonstration exists, and indeed would be impossible to a finite mind, it remains proved, both that there is a God (as is demonstrated in other ways), and that the evils in question are permitted by Him as links of a perfectly ordered universe.

But the object which I have proposed to myself extends much further than this. I am not content with having established the possibility of the said evils entering into the universe for the reason that wisdom governs it according to the Law of the Least Means, and with having inferred that what was thus possible ought to be assumed as being actually the fact. I wish, moreover, to prove in a positive way that the said evils are found in this our universe precisely for the reason indicated, namely, in order that it might be perfect and altogether worthy of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PRINCIPLE TO BE FOLLOWED IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF THE WISDOM THAT CREATES AND GOVERNS THE WORLD.

508. To prove this, it is necessary first of all to find a principle which may guide us in applying the Law of the Least Means to the universe itself; and this must be the very principle according to which Divine Wisdom was to solve the great problem, and thus trace out the way to be pursued in its operation by Divine Goodness.

This principle, which results from the things we have said above, and is found clearly indicated in the Gospel, may be expressed thus: "The Law of the Least Means will be maintained when created beings are governed in such a manner as to draw from their own activities the greatest good they possibly can yield."

The Law of the Least Action obviously requires that all created beings, as well as all their activities, should be utilized to the utmost, so that none of the good which they can be made to produce may be lost.

509. Jesus Christ seems to have insinuated that this is exactly what Divine Providence aims at, when He said that the Father's glory consists in drawing the greatest fruit from His disciples. "My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me, that beareth not fruit, He will take away, and every one that beareth fruit He will purge it, that it may bring forth

more fruit." And He gives this reason: "In this is My Father glorified, that ye bring forth VERY MUCH (THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF) FRUIT." (1) Here it is distinctly conveyed that the Providence of God tends to produce a *maximum* of good, that is to say, the greatest fruit that it is possible to gather from His vine.

510. Now, this great principle may be translated into another formula, equivalent to the first in value, but better fitted for our purpose in certain applications of it. We may word it thus: "The principle of the Least Means will be maintained when created beings are so governed that not one of their activities remains idle, that is to say, fails to bear all that fruit which it could bear by being properly employed." This same thing seems to be expressed in the words of Job: "Nothing upon earth is done without a cause," (2) namely (as appears from the context), without an end intended by Providence. Christ, in like manner, has declared that "not even a sparrow falls to the ground," unless by the Will of the Heavenly Father, (3) thereby giving us to understand that no event in this world, however small it may be, takes place without a purpose, but all are directed by the Wisdom of God to the obtaining of some good.

Such, therefore, is the inviolable law of Divine Wisdom and Goodness. Every entity, every activity, every action must yield all the good which it can yield, these things being of course considered as organic parts of the universal system.

(1) In the Latin: *In hoc clarificatus est Pater meus, ut* FRUCTUM PLURIMUM *afferatis*.—Jo. xv. 1, 2, 8.

(2) Job. v. 6.

(3) Matth. x. 29.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIRST CONSEQUENCE :—WHEN GOD CAN OBTAIN A GIVEN QUANTITY OF GOOD BY THE USE OF CREATED ENTITIES AND ACTIVITIES, IT IS NOT FITTING THAT HE SHOULD OBTAIN IT BY AN EXTRAORDINARY AND IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION OF HIS POWER.

511. The incontrovertible and evident principle last named will enable us to apply the Law of the Least Means to the government of the universe, inasmuch as there flow from it as corollaries certain truths which go to prove that the very evils, moral as well as eudemonological, which God permits, enter into the design of an Infinite Goodness, and an Infinite Wisdom.

The first of these truths is, that "God would not act wisely if, when He can obtain a given quantity of good from the entities and activities He has created, He were instead to obtain it by an immediate and extraordinary intervention of His own Divine Power." The reason is obvious. Those entities and activities from which God did not gather the fruit they were capable of bearing would remain idle and useless, in fact, they would be wasted. By His putting forth a new activity of His own, when an adequate activity had already been provided, it would come to pass that a cause was employed equal to two for obtaining an effect equal to one; whereas this surplusage of

force might, if He had so wished, have been applied to the production of another good different from that produced by the existing activities. Thus there would be a force expended foolishly, because without a sufficient reason.

512. If, therefore, the Wisdom of God, by making use of creatures and utilizing their activities, might obtain a net sum of moral and eudemonological good equal, say, to one hundred, it would give no satisfaction to His Goodness to obtain the same sum of good by miracles and other extraordinary interventions of His Power; seeing that, for this purpose, a complex of means would have to be used which, by being differently disposed, might have produced a sum of good twice as large, so that there would be a loss of good equal to one hundred.

Nor is it of any avail, as we have already proved, to say that the good obtained by the action of created beings is mixed with evils, which might have been avoided by an immediate and extraordinary intervention of God. For, we have seen that in the eyes of the universal Ruler of the world, even as is the case in the affections of humanity, good and evil neutralize each other, and the sum of good is found in the net result that remains after the balance has been struck between both. Granted, then, that in case the created entities and activities were utilized, the *maximum* of good could not be obtained from them without the admixture of evils, in consequence of the limitation inherent in all contingent beings; it would not follow that God's Power would be bound to interfere, in order to remove or to prevent those evils; because such an interference would involve a loss of good so enormous

as to lead at last to the absurdity that a great means had been employed to compass a small end.

513. Now, if it is certain, 1st, that it would be impossible to obtain from created activities all the good which they can yield, without at the same time permitting certain evils; 2ndly, that those evils could not be done away with, unless by an extraordinary intervention of God's power; 3rdly, that this intervention would be opposed to the Law of Wisdom, which is that of the Least Means; we must needs concede that the evils to which creatures are subject, including sin and the loss of the reprobate, far from disproving the Wisdom and Goodness of God, establish them.

CHAPTER XV.

CONTINUATION:—NECESSITY OF SECONDARY CAUSES.

514. The truth of which we have just spoken implies, as a natural sequel, the necessity of secondary causes.

Since the Wisdom and Goodness of God aim at obtaining the greatest good from creatures, it is clear that these could not correspond with God's design unless they were fitted to bear fruit, in other words, unless they were causes.

515. This fact—namely, that if creatures were not causes, creation would fail to obtain an end worthy of God—should be attentively considered. God, in creating, could only aim at rendering His creatures good, in imitation of Himself. If creatures were merely passive, they would have no goodness of their own, because they would have nothing but what they receive; and mere reception is not goodness, much less moral goodness. Those natures only are capable of any goodness of their own, and especially of moral goodness, which can desire and love goodness, and can operate, and hence become, by their own acts, the causes of good.

Not only the Wisdom of God but His Power also manifests itself more clearly by producing beings that are causes, than by producing beings that are devoid of action. That is not a full and perfect power which does not extend to producing other causes, capable of being perfected in virtue of their own acts: for a being which is wholly inert and

powerless to do anything, does not attain to the order of perfection. And there is a much greater exhibition of power in producing one cause alone, than in producing immediately a great number of effects. (1)

The Goodness and Wisdom of God, therefore, as well as the manifestation of His Power required that God should create beings to act as secondary causes.

516. But the same thing seemed furthermore to be required by a metaphysical necessity, springing from the nature of being. For, a being cannot be conceived as wholly devoid of action; and if it has some action, it has, on this very account, to a greater or lesser extent the nature of a cause. Entity, actuality, cause, are here synonymous terms. Hence, the concept of beings which are in no sense causes, seems to involve contradiction. The more anything is a being, the more is it a cause. Accordingly, as God could not be contented with creating only the lowest degree of entity, so He was not to be contented with creating only the lowest degree of causes.

517. These arguments which prove the necessity of secondary causes considered in their nature and taken singly, are wonderfully strengthened when we consider the order and harmony of many causes together—an order and harmony which, by combining a vast

(1) St. Thomas, speaking of the existence of secondary causes, has this admirable passage: "The reason why these causes exist must be sought, not in any deficiency of power in God, but in the immensity of His goodness. This it is that has prompted Him to communicate a similitude of Himself to things, not only in that they exist, but also in that they are the causes of other things; for in these two ways do all creatures alike attain to similarity with God, as we have shown above (Ch. xxi). Moreover, the beauty of order is thus made to shine forth in created things." (*C. Gent.*, L. III., c. 70).—See also *Summa*, p. iii., q. lxxii., art. 2.

number of individual agents into one complex whole, multiply created good a hundred, or rather a thousand-fold. But I shall speak of this a little later, when I come to show the necessity of the things created by God, being placed in mutual connexion.

518. Now, if it was necessary that the universe should be formed of causes, it was, as a consequence, necessary that God should make these causes bear fruit, that is to say, should obtain from them, taken in their complex, all the good which they were capable of producing. This is the application of the Law of the Least Means, which we purpose to establish.

519. Hence also the necessity that the natural order, and the subordination of secondary causes should be maintained, as far as was possible, without interruption in the course of the universe.

520. As beings are constant natures, so also they are constant causes. As they are harmoniously linked together, so they have a permanent order. Hence, another truth of great value, namely, that "It is in accordance with Divine Wisdom that the universe should be regulated by general and permanent laws, not by singular and arbitrary actions."

521. This truth, which flows from the fact that the universe is a complex of beings which are causes, of substances which have an action of their own, may also be proved by the immediate application of the principle of the Least Means. For, there is a much smaller expenditure of God's action in His leaving created natures to act with their own laws and forces, than in His intervening at every turn to do that Himself which can be done by the said laws and forces.

CHAPTER XVI.

SECOND CONSEQUENCE:—WHEN GOD HAS BY HIS GOVERNMENT OBTAINED ALL THE GOOD HE CAN OBTAIN FROM ALL THE ACTIVITIES OF HIS CREATURES, IT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS GOODNESS THAT HE SHOULD ADD HIS OWN IMMEDIATE ACTION, SO AS TO PRODUCE IN THEM AND TO DERIVE FROM THEM THAT GOOD WHICH THEY, IN WHATEVER WAY GOVERNED, COULD NOT BY THEMSELVES YIELD; MAINTAINING, HOWEVER, IN THE CASE OF THIS SUPERNATURAL ACTION ALSO, THE LAW OF THE LEAST MEANS.

522. The second corollary which follows spontaneously from the above principle is this: "The immediate and supernatural intervention of God's Power in creation is not by any means impossible. It cannot, however, take place except for obtaining such good as created beings, in whatever way governed, could not produce by themselves, but could produce if aided by God."

523. This intervention does in fact take place when there is question of communicating *grace*, whereby the creature is raised to a supernatural order. For, it would be impossible for man ever to attain to the *perception of God*, to communicate immediately with God, unless God of His own free Goodness communicated Himself to him. (1) In short, no man could ever,

(1) And the same must be said of all other intellective-moral creatures.

by his natural powers, perform one single act belonging to the supernatural order, and much less establish himself habitually in this order.

524. The communication of Divine grace is like a new creation: by it a new entity, a new power is made to exist in man.

But in this very gift which God bestows gratuitously on His creature outside the order of nature—a gift so befitting a Goodness which, being infinite, tends to produce all the good possible—God maintains the Law of Wisdom, the Law of the Least Means. In other words, He gave His grace in such measure, and so distributed, that, being conjoined with the activities proper to human nature, it may produce the *maximum* of fruit. Hence:—

525. I. No gift of grace is ever lost; none is ever given by God uselessly, that is to say, without bearing that fruit which God proposes to Himself in giving it. We find this truth expressed by God Himself, Who, in Isaias says: "My word shall not return to Me void." (1)

526. II. In giving grace, God takes into account the dispositions of His creature, and foresees the use

(1) "And as the rain and the snow come down from Heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth, and water it, and make it to spring, and give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall My word be, which shall go forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but shall do whatever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it" (Is. lv. 10, 11). By saying that His word goes forth from His mouth, God signifies that grace comes immediately from Him, and not from any creature. He says that His word "shall do whatever He pleases, and shall prosper in the things for which He sent it;" because, although not every grace sanctifies or converts the individual to whom it is given, owing to the resistance he opposes to it, nevertheless, it obtains other ends, other kinds of good at which God aimed in giving it.

which His creature will make of it, together with all the consequences which will ensue, not only in the individual himself to whom He gives the grace, but also in other individuals, indeed, in all mankind, nay, in all intelligent creatures. He gives it exactly at the time when, and in the quantity in which He foresees that, conjoined with the activities both natural and supernatural of the creature, it will produce a greater fruit than could be obtained from it by distributing it in any other manner whatever.

527. Thus, let us suppose for example, that the quantity of grace which there is question of distributing is as ten, (1) and that there are two infidel nations among either of which it could be dispensed. In one of these nations, there is still preserved a certain amount of natural probity, so that by its own forces alone it produces a natural-moral good equal to one hundred. (2) The other is so sunk in corruption that it only produces a natural-moral good equal to ten. God, however, in His Infinite Wisdom sees that if He were to bestow those ten degrees of grace on the first nation, this—owing perhaps to a secret pride which makes it look upon itself as virtuous because less corrupt

(1) It should be remembered that, as has been already shown, whatever may be the quantity of grace which God bestows, it can always increase indefinitely, although it always remains finite.

(2) There is no need here to enter into the question, "Whether man, after the fall, is capable of producing by his own natural forces a moral good wholly free from evil, and even from all love of self (φιλαυτία); " for, to render our argument valid, it suffices that man should be able to do by his own powers alone *some* moral good, a thing which all Catholics admit. This apart, however, I do not see any valid reason for saying that man is not able by his natural powers to peform *some act* purely out of respect for the moral law, this being a thing proportionate to human nature.

than its neighbour—would not produce with them an amount of supernatural moral-good exceeding the value of ten; whereas the latter, humbled by the consciousness of its disorders, would receive that same quantity of grace with gratitude, (1) and hence correspond to it with such zeal as to make it bear a supernatural-moral good equal to a hundred. It is plain that the Goodness of God, aiming as it always does at turning its gifts to the greatest advantage, will give the grace to the more corrupt of the two nations. (2)

Thus, the first nation will continue to produce an amount of natural virtue equal to a hundred, and the second will thenceforth produce a hundred degrees of supernatural virtue. If, on the other hand, that same

(1) Query: Can grace be received with a sentiment of gratitude by a purely natural act? If grace is considered, not as grace, that is, not relatively to its supernatural effects, but simply as a means which strengthens man against his natural corruption, the thing seems to me possible; because the object of that gratitude, namely, the diminution of natural corruption, does not as to its substance exceed the natural order. But if there is question of being grateful for supernatural effects of grace, then the gratitude is itself supernatural, and cannot therefore be felt save through grace. We must therefore discriminate between the two effects of grace (although in point of fact they are inseparable): the one is to strengthen nature by rendering it capable of natural virtue; and the other is to impart to man the power of practising supernatural virtue. The first effect, by whatever cause produced, can be known by the light of natural reason; the second cannot be known positively save by the light of grace. For the first, therefore, one may be grateful with the natural will, for the second one cannot be grateful otherwise than with the supernatural will, produced by grace itself. Here therefore we speak of the first of these two sentiments of gratitude, which is a natural sentiment, but presupposes grace in order that it may arise.

(2) This shows that grace is not given according to merit, and that natural virtue not only does not merit grace, either *de condigno*, or *de congruo*, as Theologians express it, but is not in all cases even a sufficient motive for God's bestowing grace, although sometimes it may be so.

quantity of grace were given to the first nation, the supernatural good obtained from it would only be of ten degrees, with, perhaps, a diminution also of the natural good by reason of that increase of moral perversion which is wont to follow from opposition to grace—a diminution which would find no compensation in the other nation, because of its extreme moral corruption.

528. This gives some light to understand that it is certainly not without wise reasons that God imparts the grace of Faith to certain nations much sooner than He does to others; as also to understand why the coming of the Saviour into the world was delayed for so many ages. Humanity had fallen into the profoundest depths of moral darkness when the "Sun of Justice" arose upon it. (1)

It must not, however, be supposed that from the case just indicated I mean to conclude that God always

(1) One of the causes which facilitated the promulgation of the Gospel, was undoubtedly the consciousness that men had of their own corruption, and the urgent need they felt of some reformation in order to save the very fabric of human society which was fast hurrying to utter ruin, under the overwhelming load of all kinds of vices. St. Augustine observes that it would be impossible for any one to conceive fully the state of degradation into which mankind would have sunk but for the succour brought by Christianity.

Gratias Domino Deo nostro, qui contra ista mala misit nobis adjutorium singulare. Quo enim non tolleret, quem non involveret, in quod profundum non demergeret fluvius iste horrendæ nequitiæ generis humani, nisi crux Christi in tanta velut mole auctoritatis eminentius firmiusque figeretur, cujus apprehenso robore, stabiles essemus, ne male suadentium, vel in mala impellentium, tam vasto hujus mundi gurgite abrepti sorberemur? In ista enim colluvie morum pessimorum et veteris perditæ disciplinæ, maxime venire ac subvenire debuit cœlestis auctoritas;" and he goes on in the same admirable strain. (Epis. cxxxviii).—See also *Society and its Aim* ("La Società ed il Suo Fine"), Bk. III. ch. xv.-xviii.

distributes His grace in proportion to the greater natural corruption of man. Certainly not. I have merely cited one example. In other cases God will give His grace to persons possessed of natural probity, and will not give it to others who are very corrupt. But it will always be true that, whenever He does give it, He gives it in accordance with the Law of Wisdom, that is to say, by distributing it, so as to obtain therefrom, all things considered, the greatest fruit it could ever produce in any possible distribution.

529. I say "all things considered;" because we must not think only of the immediate effect which grace produces in the persons to whom it is given or offered. These may possibly reject the grace, and yet it will bear its fruit in other persons who had the offer of it together with them, or to whom that refusal remains as a most salutary example and instruction: and it also serves other excellent ends, though mostly hidden from us. Thus our Divine Master informs us that His preaching and His miracles, with the accompanying grace, were ill received at Corozain and at Bethsaida; whereas, the same gifts were not offered to Tyre and Sidon, although if these cities had received them they would have been converted. (1)

But Christ's preaching and miracles were not intended solely for those cities of Galilee in which they took place, but for the entire world; and they wrought in fact the conversion of some Galileans, among whom Christ chose His Apostles and Disciples, who carried

(1) "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee Bethsaida; for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes" (Matth. xi. 21; Luke. x. 13).

the light of the Gospel to all nations. Hence, if we suppose that the conversion of Tyre and Sidon at a time when the world was not yet disposed to receive the Gospel, and—to use the expression of Christ—"the countries were not white already for harvest," (1) would not have led to the Gospel being so rapidly propagated, we shall at once understand how the Wisdom and Goodness of God should prefer to give the grace in question to the men of Corozain and Bethsaida, who did not accept it, rather than to those of Tyre and Sidon who would have accepted it. (2)

(1) Jo. iv. 35. These words indicate the possibility of a certain natural disposition, to which God sees fit to add His grace.

(2) In all this discourse, indeed in all this book, use is made of a *scientiamedia*, as it is technically called, after the example of the Fathers of the Church, who always had recourse to it when they spoke of the ways of Providence: I ought, therefore, to explain in what sense it seems to me that this kind of knowledge must be admitted in God. The question is this: "How can God know those things which, although they do not actually come about, would, under given circumstances, have an actual existence *(futuribilia)?*" He cannot know them in their reality, because they have no reality; and He cannot know them in their immediate causes, since these, being free, are not determined to one effect alone; nor, again, can He know them in His own decrees, because for these things which never had and never will have existence, God makes no decrees. Where, then, does He know them? My answer is: In His Wisdom. As God never does anything but with an Infinite Wisdom (according to the words of Holy Scripture, "Thou hast made all things in wisdom," Ps. ciii. 24); so He knows what, in a given hypothesis, His Wisdom ought to decree. The Law of Wisdom is that of "the Least Means," that which disposes everything so as to draw from it the greatest good possible. Therefore, given for example the hypothesis that Christ had announced His doctrine to the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, God would know whether the Law of the Least Means required that those populations should be converted by that preaching; and if it did, He would know that He would have decreed that conversion, and that the decree would have been fulfilled.—But how could God know that such conversion was the greatest good which, in the said hypothesis, could be obtained?—By taking into account all the other

530. Nevertheless, the preaching of the Gospel to those who, because of their pride, are indisposed to receive it, would not be suffered to take place unless

circumstances of the universe, and, among them, the dispositions of those populations, namely, that natural gratitude to which we have alluded in the preceding note, and in virtue of which, humbled by the consciousness of their moral disorders, they would have regarded the lights and the aids offered to them as a great boon. It is no valid objection against this to say that they were corrupt, perhaps even more corrupt than the Jewish people; for even in that case, God might have given them the grace of conversion which He withheld from the Jewish people; not because that natural disposition to receive the light of the Gospel as a great boon, was a merit to which grace was due, but because the grace received in that disposition would have borne a greater fruit, as soon as the said disposition was informed and supernaturalized by grace itself. Grace, therefore, would always have been a wholly gratuitous gift; it would have been bestowed on undeserving men, probably more undeserving than the Jews; and yet it would have produced its fruit, a fruit relatively the greatest, whereas it would not have done so if Corozain and Bethsaida had been converted instead. Thus will the Tyrians and Sidonians, at the day of judgment, be in a position to be confronted with the inhabitants of these two cities, and to stand as witnesses against them, not indeed on account of their absolute goodness, but on account of their having been better disposed to receive the grace of the Gospel, and to make that grace bear fruit, if it had been vouchsafed to them.

Now, as in this sense it is allowable to distinguish in God a *scientia media*, that is, a knowledge holding a middle place between the knowledge of *simple intelligence* and that of *vision*, as Theologians term them; so there is nothing to forbid our distinguishing in Him also a will, holding a middle place between *simple antecedent will*, and *subsequent will*, and saying with Leibnitz: "The *primitive antecedent will* has for its object every good and every evil considered in itself, apart from all combinations, and tends to promote that good and to hinder that evil. The *middle will* has reference to combinations, namely, to those cases in which an evil has some good conjoined with it; and then, if the good exceeds the evil, the will has a certain tendency towards this combination. But the *final will*, or the will that decrees, results from the consideration of all the goods and all the evils that enter into the decision to form the decree; it results from a total combination" (Theod. Bk. II. 119).

It is needless for me to tell the reader that these distinctions of several

there were others who, being well disposed, would profit by it. For we must remember that the message of salvation was sent forth in favour of the unfortunate and the humbled, who alone receive it as good tidings and bring forth abundant fruit. Hence, the Saviour declared that He was sent to "preach the Gospel to the poor,"(1) applying to Himself the prophecy of Isaias, who had described the mission of the future Messias thus: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore He hath anointed me: He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up."(2) When a man finds himself humbled, from whatever cause it may be, in this dejected state he is very grateful to the hand that offers him kindly succour, or causes a ray of hope to shine on him. And what brings him to this state—in which his heart, heretofore hard and fiercely proud, is softened down into meekness—is his misfortune, and that very corruption which is the cause of it. For, nothing can more powerfully contribute to give man a mean opinion of himself, and a sense of utter distrust in his resources, than the remorse and misery he feels in being conscious that, while on the one hand he was made for truth and justice, he has, on the other, plung-

kinds of knowledge and several kinds of will have no place in God, but only in our own human way of conceiving; and that in God there is only one most simple knowledge and one most simple will. It may perhaps be objected that God has no need of knowing things that will never be; but in reply, it will be well again to observe that this kind of knowledge serves us as a means of explaining in some manner the ways of Divine Wisdom, and this explanation is not erroneous, because in God there corresponds to it that result, which is afterwards the object of His decrees.

(1) Luke iv. 18. (2) Is. lxi. 1.

ed himself into a very abyss of darkness and iniquity. Hence also it came to pass that the first Christians, as the Apostle observes, (1) consisted for the most part of the very poor, the illiterate, the forlorn, who, in the Gospel message, found that comfort and restoration of which they stood so much in need, but of which they had no earthly hope. Wherefore Christ, among the signs by which it might be known that He was the promised Messias, laid particular stress on the fact that "The poor had the Gospel preached to them," (2) both because it was the fulfilment of the prophecies, which had assigned this as the characteristic of the preaching of the Redeemer, and because the power of giving substantial succour to all the humiliated and the miserable belongs to God alone; and lastly, because only the Wisdom of God could have found in the most dejected a disposition for the proper reception of His gift, even as only His Power and Goodness could have communicated so great a treasure, and availed themselves of human infirmity for conjoining with failing human nature a deiform structure. Here, in very truth, is a work far greater than the opening of the eyes of the blind, or the raising of the dead to life; among which signs, Our Lord places that of the preaching of the Gospel to the poor and the meek.

(1) "See your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble: but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS SIGHT (I Cor. i. 26–29).

(2) Matth. xi. 5.—Luke vii. 22.

531. III. From the fact that God, in all He does, always aims at the greatest good, it likewise follows that, in giving to a man a certain quantity of grace, He acts in such a manner that that grace may profit not only the individual to whom it is first given, but also others who, through his instrumentality will be brought to a good disposition and receive the same grace for themselves.

532. Hence, we see that God had an excellent reason for ordaining that the santification of *many* should be obtained by means of a *few* among His Saints, the chosen ministers of His mercies. The Angelic Doctor makes use of this reason for proving, among other things, the fittingness that the Eternal Word should, in His Incarnation, take to Himself only one individual (*suppositum*) of human nature, and not all. His words are: "For the very reason that a wise operator follows in his actions the shortest road he can, he ought not to do by means of many things what he is able to do by means of one. It was therefore most fitting that by one man all other men should be saved." (1)

533. Here, perhaps, some one may ask: How is it, then, that God sometimes strikes down and brings to absolute submission, by a triumphant grace, the most rebellious and obstinate wills? Is not this a great intervention of God in His creature, an immense expenditure of His Power?—Unquestionably it is. But there can be no doubt that in these cases also He follows the Law of Wisdom, the Law of the Least

(1) "*Ad brevitatem vitæ, quam sapiens operator observat, pertinet quod non faciat per multa quod sufficienter potest fieri per unum. Et ideo convenientissimum fuit quod per unum hominem omnes alii salvarentur.*" *(S. p. iii., q. iv., art. v., ad 3m.)*

Means. It is therefore reasonable to believe that in the sudden conversion of one of these hardened sinners, God provides a means of other great and numberless goods which will ensue from it, thus justifying the employment of that unusually large quantity of grace. Hence these conversions seem to have for their end, not merely the salvation of the soul that is gained by each of them (although no one could adequately estimate the treasure of good which even that one soul alone may be worth in the sight of God), but also the salvation of many others. Thus, for example, Saul, through his conversion, became the Apostle of the nations; St. Augustine became the Doctor of Grace; Dismas, Magdalen, and other sinners, whose conversions are recorded in the Gospel, became most luminous examples to all the world, and striking proofs of the mercy of God to all ages. This is why even the common sense of Christians expects great things from such sudden and solemn conversions, and when they happen, the faithful are wont to say that God has some great purpose in view for the good of the Church.

In short, God, in bestowing and distributing His grace, follows the same Law of Wisdom as He does in bestowing and distributing the gifts of nature, in creating, preserving, and directing all things. What still remains to be said will serve to indicate (as far as it is in our power to do) those ways which Wisdom traces out for the Supreme Being, and which He faithfully follows in His action, both with respect to nature, and with respect to every immediate intervention of His Power, whether ordinary or extraordinary.

CHAPTER XVII.

THIRD CONSEQUENCE:—LAW OF EXCLUDED SUPERFLUITY.

534. A third consequence which follows from the same principle is, that inasmuch as God never does anything, save in order to obtain the greatest good possible, "There can be no superfluity in His action."

535. From this law St. Thomas, with much acuteness, infers the necessity of causes that are contingent and liable to fail. He begins by saying: "In those things which are properly governed by Providence there must not be anything in vain." On this principle he argues thus: If all the causes in the universe were to act by necessity, their effects, even though superfluous, could not be prevented. Now, if many effects unnecessary for the production of the greatest good could not be prevented, there would be superfluity. Consequently, the Wisdom which governs the universe would be wanting in that great principle of wisdom which requires the exclusion of superfluity. (1)

(1) The words of St. Thomas are understood differently by others; but it appears to me that this is the true purport of the reasoning of the Holy Doctor. The passage is as follows: "*In his quæ providentia debite reguntur, non debet esse aliquid frustra. Cum igitur manifestum sit causas aliquas esse contingentes, ex eo quod impediri possunt ut non producant suos effectus, patet quod contra rationem providentiæ esset, quod omnia ex necessitate contingerent*" *(C. Gent.,* L. III. q. lxxii. 7). These lines I explain thus: "In the universe there must be nothing in vain. Therefore there must be contingent causes, in order that their effects may be impeded and cut short when they happen to be superfluous."

536. This principle obtains not in the natural order only, but also in the supernatural. Jesus Christ plainly declared as much when He said to the Apostles: "My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He will take away, and every one that beareth fruit He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (1)

537. It befits Divine Wisdom, therefore, to hinder all those effects of natural causes which would be over-abundant, and in no way contribute to the sum total of the universal good. Hence we find that created beings, brought most wisely into mutual proximity, serve to check one another's propagation and action. The excessive luxuriance of plants is tempered by the various degrees of sterility in the ground, and by other causes limiting vegetation. The necessity of contending for the alimentary soil moderates the multiplication of the several species; and their exuberant productiveness is also kept down by the animals to which they serve as food. The animals in like manner are exposed to the action of a great number of natural agents which prevent each species from propagating beyond a certain limit; and among the causes acting in this manner, one of the most noteworthy is that war which we see incessantly carried on among brutes, with the result that the weaker and most prolific kinds become the food of the stronger and less prolific. Thus, does the most wise Author and Ruler of the universe, by this kind of strife which is observed in all nature, remove whatever, from being excessive or superfluous in the effects

(1) Jo. xv. 1, 2.

and actions of created causes, would tell injuriously on the great sum total of good at which He aims. To this end He has disposed beings and their actions in an admirable proportion and a stupendous harmony, of which not a single one of these beings has the cause in itself. To express myself in the language of a recent writer, God "utilizes death itself for the advantage of life." (1) He makes corruption serve generation, and by destroying antecedent forms, He continually restores the world and renews its youth.

538. Even the death of man is regulated by the Supreme Goodness according to this law. It serves the great purpose of removing from the universe the superfluous and the useless. Jesus Christ taught us this truth in that parable wherein He showed that the good are called to their reward at the very moment when the fruit, for the sake of producing which they were till then left on earth, has reached its full maturity:—"The kingdom of God is, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up whilst he knoweth not. For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear. And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." (2) That word "immediately" *(statim mittit falcem)*, is specially deserving of attention, inasmuch as it indicates clearly enough that God never leaves His elect

(1) Roselly de Lorgues, *De la mort avant l'homme*, ch. ii.—This chapter deserves to be read. The author there proves that, for brute animals, neither pain nor death has the nature of an evil.

(2) Mark iv. 26–28.

on this earth for a single instant beyond the time which is necessary for them to bear all the fruit they are destined to give. The very same law determines the hour of the death of the reprobate, that is to say, of all those God forsees will no longer give the fruit they ought to give, either directly by their own amendment, or indirectly by occasioning sanctity in others, and, more in general, contributing to the increase of the sum total of good. "Every tree," says Jesus Christ, "that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down." (1) Hence St. John the Baptist, when he saw great crowds of Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized by him, said that by so doing they were escaping from the wrath that was hanging over their heads, and exhorted them to bring forth worthy fruits of penance, lest God should destroy them:—"Ye offspring of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of penance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our Father. For I tell you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. For now the axe is laid to the root of the tree. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." (2) In which words it is necessary to note how the Precursor says that the axe is laid to the root of the tree, because the Messias had already entered the world, and was ready to commence the preaching of the Gospel. Hence men's ingratitude and indocility to the Word Incarnate Himself would have rendered them unworthy of every other grace;

(1) Matth. vii. 19. (2) Luke iii. 7–9: Matth. iii. 7–10.

and, as a result, their hearts would have become hard and sterile for evermore, so that, like useless trees, they would justly deserve to be cut down.

This very grave truth, that the abuse of the graces offered, and the refusal to yield to Christ the fruits He expects from them, leads, as a just punishment, to the deprivation of the heavenly gifts and to the other sad consequences we have just named, would seem to be signified also in that fact—a fact so full of mystery—in which Christ, being hungry, came seeking fruit from the fig-tree that had abundance of leaves on it, and not finding any fruit, because it was not the season, He cursed the tree, and the tree immediately withered. (1) From the same fact we learn, moreover, that in order that men may be preserved in life, they must not only yield fruit, but yield it at the time in which Christ expects it, that is, when that fruit can be of service for the good of the universe, for the final sum total of good. Hence we may justly infer that, even supposing a man by continuing in life could give some fruit, he will be taken away before he gives it, if God sees that he would retard its production beyond the time in which it is required by the universal order. For, that fruit, coming too late to increase the sum of the final good, would be accounted as no fruit; therefore the Master, Who has then no need of it, would disown it, and, as a consequence, execute upon that

(1) Mark xi. 13–14.—This is why Simeon and Isaias before him (Is. viii. 14), said of Christ that "He was set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel" (Luke ii. 34). For, as to accept His grace was the same as to rise from sin, so to refuse that grace, was the same as to fall into ruin. Hence those words of Christ: "If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin." Jo. xv. 22.)

ST. ALBERTUS COLLEGE

tree, which has nothing but leaves on it, the terrible sentence: "May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more for ever." (1)

Nevertheless, there are also cases in which the Master, Who, though He was angry with the fig-tree which He had planted in His vineyard, because, having come for full three years seeking fruit on it, he had found none, is induced to wait another year at the earnest request of the dresser of the vineyard, who promises to dig about that tree, and dung it. (2) In the success of that request of the dresser of the vineyard, we see clearly represented the efficacy of the prayers which pastors offer on behalf of sinful souls intrusted to their care. For, those prayers are a new accident which causes a change in the universal reckoning. Hence, through them, it comes to pass that that fruit which, given too late, would not be opportune for the good and the harmony of the universe, and therefore not deserving to be waited for, becomes still opportune and harmonious, and, as such, is still awaited by the all-wise Master.

539. But it may be well to explain, by a great and solemn example, what that time is in which He Who is Infinite Wisdom seeks fruit from His trees, and if He does not find it, destines them for the fire. Let it be that of the Deluge. There the tree from which fruit was expected was mankind at large; for the allegory applies equally to individuals, to societies, and to humanity as a whole.

Mankind had grown totally depraved by the grossest sensuality. God, because Essential Goodness, wished

(1) Mark xi. 14. (2) Luke xiii. 6–8.

to restore it; but He wished to do so by the least means, because He is Essential Wisdom. There were two ways before Him: to correct depraved mankind by warnings, threats, preachings, and other means of His Providence; or to destroy it, saving at the same time some little root which was not corrupt, and which by again shooting up might grow into a new and better kind of tree. Wisdom found this second way much the simpler and readier of the two. Accordingly, It chose this, and submerged in the waters the entire race, with the exception of one virtuous family, destined to be the stock of the new generations. Now, even we, feeble as our minds are, can understand how God, by so disposing, was adopting a plan which would, in the course of a few centuries, re-people the earth with a new and incorrupt race. Without that summary measure, who can say how much longer it would have taken for the generations born of, and brought up by corrupt families, to be cured of the hereditary disorder, and to become equally good? Who can say for how many centuries depravity and scandal would have continued to pass on from father to son, from age to age, increasing perhaps instead of diminishing? Even supposing that a time would have come in which the perverse habits inviscerated in families being uprooted, the world had at last succeeded in reforming itself; who can say how many and what kinds of means it would have been necessary to employ for that end? Granting, however, what is uncertain, that such period had arrived, it would then have been the season of fruits for that fig-tree. But God did not require fruits at so remote a period; He required them earlier and in greater abundance, and of a better quality. He

therefore struck the tree with barrenness leaving only one offshoot, and thus He obtained a new race of men in a much shorter time; a race which, being freed from the contagion of the former perversity, would be capable of yielding more copious fruits than could have been obtained by preserving the whole of mankind as it was. For, men, with that extreme propensity to evil with which they were so deeply infected, and which would probably have communicated itself also to the one stem that still remained incorrupt, would have gone on multiplying their enormities to a frightful extent.

540. In accordance with the same rule of wisdom, the five cities were destroyed, the nations that dwelt in Palestine were pronounced accursed, and many other peoples doomed to perish; families, likewise, were extinguished, and individuals died of a premature death.

541. Yet, it seems that this law is subject to exceptions. How many wicked men are left to live out a long life; how many families are preserved which seem to be hardly anything else than nurseries of evil! —These exceptions, however, are only apparent; for the principles of God's Wisdom have no exception. To understand this, it may be enough to make the two following considerations:—

1st. The reason why it is more expedient that an individual, a family, a nation should be taken off the face of the earth, is not the scarcity of the special fruit which they yield for their own advantage, but the scarcity of the fruit which their action gives, considered in its bearings on all mankind and on all times. We ought, therefore, to take into account the virtue of the

good which is exercised and perfected by means of the iniquity of the wicked. An exquisite fruit is thus yielded by the wicked, not indeed to themselves, but to others, to the Master of the field, Whose Infinite Goodness considers the complex good of all His creatures as His own good, as His glory. Let us not, then, forget the countless advantages which God draws even from the worst of sinners. On these advantages no one has written more copiously than the great Bishop of Hippo; and I will here quote one extract from the admirable reflections he makes on this subject. Having shown how the wicked impel the good to seek refuge in God, to place all their hopes in Him alone, to have recourse to Him by fervent prayers (and to the good these things are a large source of moral improvement), he adds that God makes use of the wicked for correcting the good themselves, and bringing them to that grand act of perfect charity which consists in loving one's enemies, and doing them good. He says: "There can be no doubt that by means of evils, God exercises and scourges us. Wherefore does He scourge us? Obviously, in order to the kingdom of heaven. For, 'what son is there whom his Father does not correct' (Heb. xii. 7)? By so doing, He trains us up for the everlasting inheritance. And He often procures us this good by means of wicked men, using them for exercising and perfecting our love, which He wishes to be extended even to our enemies. For, the Christian is not perfect in love unless he fulfils what Christ has commanded, saying: 'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you' (Matt. v. 45). In this way, the devil himself is vanquished and the crown of victory is gained. Now,

the malice of wicked men is the left-hand armour of the just, according to those words of the Apostle: 'By the armour of justice on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour' (II Cor. vi. 7, 8). From these and the other things which he goes on to enumerate, it plainly appears that just as the right-hand armour was the glory of God, the good name, the truth by which the just were known, their not being sorrowful but rejoicing, their enriching many, their being possessed of all things; so the left-hand armour consisted in their being esteemed ignoble and of evil repute, deceivers, unknown, in their being put to death, straitened, saddened, seeming to be needy and possessed of nothing." (1)

542. 2ndly, When God intends to remove from the earth an individual, a family, a nation that bears no fruit, He does not carry out His purpose by a miraculous intervention; for this would be opposed to the Law of the Least Means. He simply disposes the series of secondary causes in such a manner that they may naturally produce that effect. To obtain this, it was necessary that He should impart a special order to the concatenation of secondary causes, all of which He sees by a most simple act of His mind; and that order cannot be changed without the whole of the most complicated arrangement of these causes being changed. He had, therefore, to consider also whether the order of secondary causes was such as would lead to the attainment of the greatest good; for, such is the limitation of created things (which are precisely the complex of secondary causes), that sometimes it is

(1) *Enarrat. in Ps. xciii.* 28.

impossible to obtain a partial good effect without losing a greater, or to remove an evil without opening the way to a worse evil. Hence a tree, though itself giving no fruit to its master, would not be altogether sterile if, by its being cut down and cast into the fire, the field or the vineyard were to suffer injury; for in that case, the tolerating of it would be a true gain to the produce of that field or vineyard. This is why Christ has said that He leaves the cockle, although a hurtful thing, to grow along with the wheat, because, if it were rooted up, the wheat also might be rooted up with it.

543. The Law of Divine Wisdom, therefore, is one without exceptions of any kind; but the applications of it are most diversified, according to those manifold circumstances which only an infinite mind can embrace in their entirety at a simple glance, even as it can see, with unerring accuracy, what purpose they can serve best.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FOURTH CONSEQUENCE:—THE LAW OF THE PERMISSION OF EVIL.

544. From the same law we can see why and according to what rule God permits evil.

545. The reader must recall to mind what evil is. We have seen that it is a privation of good (183–187). And since good is the entity itself of things, the more entity there is in a thing, the more good there is in it, and there is more *entity* where there is more *action*.

It follows that the permission of evil is a corollary of the Law of the Least Means. For, if this Law imports that God should not, as Creator, Preserver, and Sanctifier, intervene in nature save with that quantity of action which will produce a greater good than it could produce by being employed in any other manner—the greatest good possible; it is clear that in many cases God will not intervene, and in many cases He will cease to act or to produce secondary causes, or their activities and perfections. Such cases will be all those in which, if He were to act, the activity employed or produced would not bear the *maximum* of fruit, which alone satisfies His Infinite Goodness.

546. Now, for God to abstain from action is the same thing as to permit evil. For, as He is the *First Cause*, so to Him all the effects of *secondary causes* also are referable. Consequently, if He ceases in some

part to concur with these causes, many of their effects will cease. This absence of effects, or of their fulness and perfection, is not, therefore, the direct work of God —Who, whenever He acts, produces a good—but comes naturally of itself, given that God abstains from action. And as the First Cause, although it is the universal cause of all things, does not take away the free-will of intellective creatures when they do good; so the abstention of the First Cause from action does not take away the free-will of those creatures when, failing in their action, they do evil. This second point is not more difficult to understand than the first. If in the first there lies a mystery, no wonder there should lie a mystery in the second also. Since it can be proved that the fact is so, reason obliges us to admit it, even though we should not be able to explain how it comes about. Now, that God, as First Cause, is also the universal cause of all finite activities, may be easily inferred from the absurdity to which the contrary supposition would necessarily lead. For in that supposition there would be entities, or acts of entities, *independent* of God: and if there were anything independent of God, then God would no longer be God: the activity which escaped from His creative act would be self-existent. *Self-existent being* would, therefore, be divided into many: the Absolute Infinite would cease, since the concept of the Absolute Infinite is that of a being who embraces in himself, with a most simple unity, all that is self-existent.

547. On the other hand, whoever has arrived at forming a clear concept of creation (and here under the term *creation* I include every action of God *ad extra;* for, in truth, God always acts by way of creation

inasmuch as He produces at each instant that which, without His action, would not exist), will readily understand that creation produces things with their order, and hence produces the accidents as subsisting in, and emanating from, the substance; it produces the acts of secondary causes as acts belonging to them, and proceeding from them according to the mode of their operation, whether that mode be free or necessary. Accordingly, the intervention and action of God never destroys free action; on the contrary, it produces it, causes it to be free, as it really is. In other words, it operates in such a manner, that the free act may proceed from the free choice of an intelligent cause, to which, therefore, that act is justly imputed; because, to impute an act means nothing else than to ascribe it to the free cause which has produced it.

Hence:—

548. 1st, If a created and free cause does evil, that evil is imputable to itself alone; for imputability is nothing but the relation which an action has, not with the First Cause, but with the cause which has freely and immediately produced it.

2ndly, The created and free cause which has done evil, might have avoided that evil, and chosen to do good instead, for otherwise it would not be free.

3rdly, God, as First Cause, produced this free cause which has chosen evil, and produced it such that it might have chosen good instead; for otherwise, He would not have produced it free.

4thly, This free cause, by choosing evil, failed in the completeness and perfection of its act, although it had the power not to fail.

5thly, God, as First Cause, produced the free cause

even in the instant in which it was failing in the completeness and perfection of its act, whilst, at the same time, it had the power not to fail, that is to say, He produced it capable of not failing. But He did not in any way produce the failure of its act; because that failure, as a thing belonging solely to the order of privation, could not be produced by a cause which is all activity, which never fails, whose action is unerring. (1) Thus in the First Cause, there was not act accompanied with privation, but merely a negation of act; and this negation limited in such a manner as not to take away from the secondary cause the power of rendering its act complete. It simply permitted that the act of that power should fail in the perfection which was demanded by its nature, and which the secondary cause might have given it, but did not.

6thly, God's *permission* of moral evil is not the cause of that evil; since the cause of evil is a *deficient cause*, and in God there can be no deficiency, every act of His being perfect. But as this perfect act of God, for the very reason that it is perfect, has the *maximum* of good for its object, so it does not extend to producing all the perfect acts which secondary causes are capable of performing. As a consequence, it comes to pass that deficient causes posit some acts which are imperfect and deficient; not indeed because they

(1) St. Augustine, that great intellect who dived into this subject more deeply perhaps than any other known thinker, expresses this truth as follows:—*Peccavit quidem opus Dei, id est angelus vel homo; sed opere suo peccaverunt, non opere Dei: ipsi sunt enim bonum opus Dei; peccatum vero eorum malum opus ipsorum est, non Dei*" (*Op. imperf. contra Julianum*, Lib. V., lxiv)—Angel and man, who are the work of God, sinned indeed; but they sinned by their own work, not by the work of God. For they are a good work of God; but their sin is their own evil work, not God's.

could not do otherwise, but their own free choice and this their actual and free deficiency constitutes *free moral evil* which entails *a necessary moral evil*, as in the case of the reprobate in hell and of those in a state of sin. The *First Cause*, therefore, produces no evil; all evil comes from secondary causes, which alone are liable to fail.

7thly, God's permission of moral evil does not take away from the free cause the power of avoiding it, but simply does not prevent that cause from committing it. For, the object of such permission is not *anterior* in time to the evil which is committed, as though it were an impulse given to the commission of it, or a withdrawal of the power to avoid it, so as to render the said evil a necessity: no, it is *contemporaneous* with the evil; it is the actual evil itself. Hence the evil is not *caused* by God either *positively* or *negatively:* it is *merely permitted.*

8thly, *Necessary moral evil* is consequent upon *free moral evil*, and it sometimes takes place through a withdrawal of moral forces which is demanded by Divine justice. In that case necessary moral evil is a penal evil, that is to say, a just penalty of an antecedent free moral evil; and as such it is willed by eternal justice, God concurring negatively, that is, by not giving, or by withdrawing as a just judgment, moral strength and vigour. Such is precisely the case of the reprobate in hell. For, as St. Augustine says: "The necessity which causes a man not to be free to abstain from sin, is a PENALTY of those sins from which he was free to abstain when there was no pressure of necessity to compel him." (1)

(1) *Peccandi necessitas, unde abstinere liberum non est, illius peccati*

9thly, Lastly, God's concurrence with penal evil is negative by refusing to or withdrawing from the creature the eudemonological good of which it has made itself unworthy by sin.

549. God, then, is not the cause of free sin (*culpa*); and if in Holy Scripture He is sometimes described as being such, the words have a different sense from that

PÆNA *est, a quo abstinere liberum fuit, quando nullum pondus necessitatis urgebat* (St. Aug. *Op. imper. contra Julianum*, Lib. I. cv.). Let it be well noted that, according to the mind of St. Augustine, and indeed of the Catholic Church, all necessity of sinning ceases in those who are in the state of grace, or who have recourse to the aid of grace, except in the case of venial sins and moral imperfections, from which no one is entirely free. The Holy Doctor speaks of the sad necessity of sinning only in order to give glory to the grace of Christ, which alone delivers men from it. Hence in the same place he says: *A peccatis omnibus sive originalibus, sive moralibus, vel quæ facta sunt, vel ne fiant, non liberat nisi gratia Dei per* JESUM *Christum Dominum nostrum, in quo regenerati sumus, et a quo didicimus orando dicere non solum,* '*Dimitte nobis debita nostra,*' *id est quia peccavimus, verum etiam,* '*Ne nos inferas in tentationem,*' *id est ne peccemus.* As for the rest, it is a mere calumny of the Jansenists to attribute to St. Augustine the doctrine that man, in the present state of fallen nature, always acts in virtue of that delectation which is the stronger in him, without the intervention of his free-will; in which case every sin would be necessary, since there would not then be in man liberty from necessity (*libertas a necessitate*), but only liberty from coaction (*libertas a coactione*). The fact is, that St. Augustine teaches most clearly: 1st, that grace may be lost by sin; 2ndly, that he who, being in the state of grace, does sin, always sins freely, because in a man in the state of grace there is no longer any necessity of sinning; 3rdly, that in the state of unregenerate fallen nature, there are two kinds of sins, some necessary, others free (culpæ). Hence in replying to Pelagius, who (singular to say) was trying to brand him with the same calumny as the Jansenists, he says: *Cum igitur et illa fateamur in hominibus esse peccata quæ committuntur* NON NECESSITATE, *sed voluntate, quæ tantummodo peccata sunt,* UNDE AB EIS LIBERUM EST ABSTINERE; *et peccatis de ignorantiæ vel affectionum necessitate venientibus, quæ jam non solum peccata,* VERUM ETIAM PŒNÆ SUNT PECCATORUM, *plenum sit genus humanum: quomodo dicis definitionibus nostris peccatum nec in moribus inveniri?*" (*Ibid.*)

in which He is said to be the cause of penal evil. Of neither of these evils is God a *positive cause*, or a *deficient cause*. But of free sin, precisely because dependent on the free choice of the creature, He is no cause at all, not even *negative*. For, He does not withdraw from the free-will of the creature its power: on the contrary, that power by which the creature can freely avoid sin is given and maintained by Him. He simply abstains from compelling it to choose good, and permits it to choose evil. It is true that when the creature chooses to perform an act to which nothing is wanting of moral perfection (and it is in this that moral good consists), God concurs positively to the completeness of that act; and when the creature chooses to perform an act deficient in moral perfection, He does not concur to that deficiency. But such non-concurrence does not, as we have said, precede the existence of the deficient act, nor determine it, nor render its opposite impossible. At one and the same time, man chooses to act imperfectly, and God does not produce the perfection of the act *(simply permissive cause)*. The two things are simultaneous, and neither of them has any influence on the other.

550. In penal evil, on the contrary, in physical evil, as also in all the necessary acts of nature, God is a *negative cause*, inasmuch as these acts do not take place, for the very reason that He does not give the activity which produces them; for, if He created that activity, they, not being free but necessary, would indubitably take place. Those evils, therefore, which are both physical and penal (for, if they were not also penal, that is, if they gave no pain to the intelligent nature, they would not properly speaking be evils), are, on the

one hand, acts of Divine justice, and as such, a just motive of praise to God; and yet, on the other, they are not anything positively inflicted by God on His creature; for to His creature God gives nothing but good. They are merely penalties which nature suffers on account of its own imperfection, and to which God leaves it as an act of justice. Let us hear St. Augustine: "When therefore God punishes, He as judge punishes those who transgress the law, NOT BY INFLICTING EVIL ON THEM BY HIS OWN ACTION, but by leaving them to that which they have chosen of their own accord, in order that the sum of their miseries may be completed." (1)

551. But here it may be well to explain more fully the nature of this *negative cause* of penal evil. For, God is the negative cause of this kind of evil in two ways: 1st, by not giving the activity which would produce the effect in its completeness, as is the case in purely physical evils (*non-giving cause*); 2ndly, by ceasing from action, as is the case in necessary moral evils, which, as we have seen, are also penal, as in the reprobates in hell, from whom He withdraws His grace (*ceasing cause*).

552. As regards physical acts which prove defective (and which the schoolmen called *peccata naturæ*), God is not their negative cause by withdrawing from nature its forces—no; on the contrary, it is He that maintains those forces, and, by preserving natural things, preserves unbroken the series of secondary causes from the beginning of the world even to the

(1) "*Cum ergo punit Deus, ut judex punit eos qui legem prætereunt, non eis* INFERENS DE SE IPSO MALUM, *sed in id quod elegerunt eos expellens, ad complendam summam miseriarum*" (Enarr. in Ps. v. 10).

end. But foreseeing from the very first that immense series of causes and effects which would be the best adapted to His design; (1) foreseeing also in that series, all those defective and imperfect effects which, while they were necessary for the same design, would be fitting penalties of guilt; He, in creating natural things, gave them those forces with such limitations, and placed them in such mutual relations of opposition which would result in those real defects in which the guilty were to find a just source of suffering. In other words, He *did not endow* nature with those entities and forces and that order which would have prevented every defective act penal to man; nor did He Himself come to her aid with supernatural forces, which would have had the same effect. Nay, He did so dispose things at the beginning, that man, so long as he remained in the state of innocence, should not receive any pain from the forces of nature; so that during that time there would not have been on earth the penal evil of which we speak. But knowing the duration of that time of primitive innocence, and knowing that it would be followed by a time of sin, He disposed that nature should, according to the series of causes and effects, develop in due course the penal evils, through a pre-established harmony between the physical and moral evils to which man concurred by his own will.

553. Thus all the primitive forces proper to nature remained. They were not diminished, but were left by

(1) Such is the doctrine of St. Thomas:—"*Sic providentur naturales effectus, ut etiam causæ naturales ad illos naturales effectus ordinentur, sine quibus illi effectus non provenirent.*" S. p. I., q. xiii., art. 8.

God to their natural development, pre-established by His Wisdom. Nevertheless, it is true that God, by withdrawing from nature, at the same time deprived it of that beneficent influence which His special presence conferred. But of this beneficent action of the Creator of nature I shall speak later, when I come to treat of the *negative-ceasing cause*.

554. Again, the fact of God's having created and given order to secondary causes from the beginning, not in an unlimited quantity, but "in measure and number, and weight," (1) is not opposed to what was said above, namely, that the creative act extends to all the acts of each created substance; for, the creative act, far from taking away from secondary causes their efficacy, is that which produces it. Hence, when we say that all creatures were disposed by God at the beginning of their existence, we simply mean that in that first disposition there was not included the law which would determine the acts they were to produce in succession; although the creative act embraced those acts themselves just as they would be determined. In short, the order of creatures is the order of the creative act itself, which is so constituted, that in their first state there already exist, potentially and virtually, all their successive states, and the actions through which the preceding state passes into that which follows.

555. Now, this order which God established in natural things with such exalted wisdom as to obtain from it all the defective acts which were to be a punishment of sin, was a necessary consequence of the

(1) Wisd. xi. 21.

principle of the Least Means, which requires that God should obtain all that He can from nature, through the forces and aptitudes which He has bestowed and ordered in it. Hence, Holy Scripture frequently invites us to contemplate that first established order, to the end that we may come to understand the sublimity of Creative Wisdom. Thus, for example, we read in Ecclesiasticus: "The works of God are done in judgment from the beginning, and from the making of them He distinguished their parts, and their beginnings" (the stars and the Angels who rule them) "are in His hands for all generations. He beautified their movements for ever; they have neither hungered nor laboured, and they have not ceased from their works. Nor shall any of them straiten his neighbour at any time. Be not thou incredulous to His word. After this, God looked upon the earth, and filled it with His goods. The soul of every living thing hath He shown forth before the face thereof, and into it they return again." (1) Herein are clearly indicated the formation and primitive distribution of natural causes, and the whole series, wisely pre-established, of their effects. In the same book it is shown how God so ordered things in their first institution, that they should conspire for the advantage of the good and for the punishment of the wicked: "Good things were created for the good from the beginning; so for the wicked, good and evil things." And a little further on: "Fire, hail, famine, and death, all these were created for vengeance. The teeth of beasts, and scorpions, and serpents, and the sword taking vengeance upon the

(1) Ecclus. xvi. 26-31. See the Greek Text.

ungodly unto destruction. In His commandments they shall feast, and they shall be ready upon earth when need is, and when their time is come, they shall not transgress His word." (1) It is also noteworthy, how often Holy Scripture reminds us that God foresaw all times, and assigned to things and events their own proper seasons, and that they are all good at the seasons assigned to them. For "He seeth from eternity to eternity." (2) Hence "it is not to be said: This is worse than that; for all shall be well approved in their time." (3)

556. But as, under the disposition made at the moment of creation, the action of natural beings, by failing at certain times, would prove a punishment to the wicked; so it followed as a consequence of the limitation of created things, that the good also—who on this earth are mixed up with the bad—would sometimes be involved in misfortunes. I mean those just, who, when the primitive causes were, by their detrimental interaction, producing the penal evil, found themselves, accidentally so to speak, in the road. Eternal Wisdom, therefore, had to take account also of this fact in so far as it entailed an unmerited suffering on the good. It had to consider those accidental sufferings, which happen as it were unintentionally on the part of the Author of nature, and among them the cessation which would follow of the punishment of the wicked. Before regulating the events of the universe, it had to answer the following question: "Would the avoiding of these sufferings of the just be a sufficient good to render the

(1) Ecclus. xxxix. 30, 35–37. (2) *Ibid.* 25.
(3) *Ibid.* xxxix. 40.

employment of that activity which would be necessary for this purpose, supremely wise?" or: "Would the amount of activity which would have to be thus put forth be employed to the best advantage, bear the *maximum* of fruit?" Wisdom answered negatively for some cases, and affirmatively for others. These latter are the cases of those wicked men who, out of regard for the just, escape the punishment they deserve, entirely or in part, their debt remaining to be paid off in the future life. The former are the cases of those just who are subjected to sufferings which they do not deserve, or which are greater than they deserve, as happened in JESUS Christ, in the Blessed Virgin, and in many of the Saints: and for these unmerited sufferings God makes ample compensation in the life to come.

557. We must, therefore, distinguish the rule from the apparent exception, which arises in the application of the rule, by reason of the limitation of beings. The rule is, that natural things are disposed with a tendency favourably to affect the good, and to punish the wicked. The reverse of this is the exception. Hence this rule divides itself into two parts:—

First part. Natural effects are so ordered as to conspire, not to the detriment of the good, but to their advantage.

Exception.—The wicked are left to enjoy as much of the advantages of the good as is necessary to the end that the order and series of natural causes may not be interrupted. (1) It is thus that God "maketh His sun

(1) Job said: "O that my sins, whereby I have deserved wrath, and the calamity that I suffer, were weighed in a balance: as the sand of the sea, this would appear heavier" (Ch. vi. 1, 2). But Baldad, one of his friends, in replying, observed among other things that is was impossible to

to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust." (1)

Second part. Natural effects are so disposed as to inflict pain on the wicked.

Exception.—The good are subjected to as much of the natural evils destined for the wicked as is again necessary to the end that the order and series of natural causes may not be interrupted. It is thus that we can account for the blindness of the man who was healed by Christ, and who had neither himself sinned, nor yet his parents; (2) and for the death of those Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices; and of those eighteen upon whom the tower fell in Siloe, and who, as Christ Himself certified, were not by any means the worst among sinners. (3)

558. Both these laws are proclaimed in Holy Scripture. As to the first, St. Paul tells us that God has, together with Christ, given to men all things. (4) JESUS Christ forbids His followers to be anxious about temporal things: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all those things shall be added unto you;" (5) the Father having so disposed them that where there is true virtue, there they shall follow.

As to the second, the temporal penalties which the wicked are threatened with are innumerable; for,

save him from his sufferings without interrupting the course of natural things; and this was not a thing to be asked of God, for the reason that no one could estimate how many greater evils might follow, and how much good be hindered, if it were granted: "Shall the earth be forsaken for thee, and shall the rocks be removed out of their place?" (Ch. xviii. 4).

(1) Matt. v. 45.
(2) Jo. ix. 3.
(3) Luke xiii. 1–5.
(4) Rom. viii. 32.
(5) Matt. vi. 33.

"fire, hail, famine and death, all these were created for vengeance." (1)

559. Now, these punishments which come as natural effects are produced by God negatively, that is, by abstaining from action: created natures having been disposed by Him from the beginning in such a manner that they should not produce the good relative to them, but fail in that act—not always a physical act, but very often one of order and harmony. For, in the complex of things, even order and harmony are an act, an entity the more.

560. Sometimes, however, God is the negative cause of necessary evils, not merely by omitting to act, but also by withdrawing His beneficent action. St. Augustine explains in this way the Scriptural expression that God hardens men's hearts; "God," he says, "hardens not by imparting malice, but by not imparting mercy." (2) This, however, requires special attention, in order not to be misunderstood. Does God withdraw His grace from sinners by a positive act, as a man, for example, who takes back from his neighbour what he had lent him? By no means; for although in the sinner, the illumination and sanctification of grace ceases, and therefore, in this sense, God's action in him ceases, nevertheless it does not cease by a special act of God Himself positively recalling it; but ceases rather in the way that the illumining action of the sun ceases in a man who obstinately covers his own eyes, whilst the sun itself continues to shine as before. Thus Cardinal Bellarmine

(1) Ecclus. xxxix. 35.

(2) "*Nec obdurat Deus impertiendo malitiam, sed non impertiendo misericordiam*" (Epist. cxciv. 14).

teaches that man is now born deprived of grace, not because God is not disposed to give it, but because grace encounters in man, at the very moment of his generation, the impediment of original sin, which is like the blindness that prevents one from enjoying the light. Only that this blindness, this impediment, is not in the material eyes, but in the will itself, which constitutes the human person, the subject of sin, and which is afterwards healed only by the remedial grace of JESUS Christ. And in what does this impediment consist? In an opposition between the will infected with sin and illumining grace: in a repugnance that God, Who is Infinite Holiness, should come to dwell in a soul that is in sin—a thing altogether incompatible with the Divine attributes.

561. And as Adam by his transgression deprived himself of the grace which illumined and sanctified him, so by a natural consequence there ceased that special beneficent influence which God had extended to nature. That influence, being intended for the benefit of man in the state of grace, would be at man's service only so long as he remained united with God, trusted in God and not in nature, and thus kept himself under the protection of God, Who had subjected nature to him and ordered it for his good.

CHAPTER XIX.

RECAPITULATION, AND CONNEXION WITH WHAT FOLLOWS.

562. Here I will briefly recapitulate what has been said thus far.

God is the *First Cause* of all that takes place in the universe, but sometimes he is a *positive*, and sometimes a *negative* cause.

563. The First Cause, in so far as it is positive, may always be called *creative;* for God does not immediately intervene in that which can be produced by a secondary cause. Hence, when He intervenes, or in so far as He intervenes, He produces a new thing, that is to say, a thing of which there is no sufficient cause in nature.

564. As to the negative cause, we have said that it is of two kinds, the *deficient* and the *non-deficient;* and we have shown that God is never a deficient cause, but that deficiency belongs to the secondary causes only.

565. The non-deficient negative cause is, again, of two kinds, the *permissive*, and the *inactive*.

566. The *merely permissive cause* is that which does not take away the secondary causes, nor the forces with which they are endowed, capable of acting with full effect, but simply permits them to fail in the production of that effect. It is in this way that God is the cause, or rather, is not the cause of free moral evil *(culpa);* since this evil is committed by the creature alone, with its own free-will, in defiance of the eternal

law; for it is God Who, far from destroying that free-will, creates and maintains it.

567. The *inactive negative cause* is that which does not produce beings, or their forces, or their effects. It is in this way that God is not the cause of superfluities, but is the cause of their absence, and of *penal evil* following as a result.

God is not the cause of superfluities, that is to say, He does not produce them, He excludes them from the universe.

568. Penal evil comes also from God in the same way, namely, by His not producing the contrary good.

Physical evil lies in the deficiency of the goods necessary to life, in bodily pains, in bodily imperfections, in death.

Intellectual evil lies in ignorance, in dullness of understanding, and the like.

The moral penal evil lies in original sin, in necessary sins, in unavoidable moral defects.

569. These evils, being necessary, proceed from necessary causes in which there is something wanting in order to their perfect action. This something which is wanting in them may, by a most general denomination, be termed an activity or an entity which is not given to them. For not only the weakness of a power, but also the disharmony between divers powers, is the want of some actuality, if not always in the beings or in their powers taken singly, at least in their complex.

570. Now, God is an *inactive cause*, sometimes by *abstaining*, sometimes by *ceasing* from action.

Thus, at the beginning, God abstained from producing those beings, or, more generally, those secondary causes, which were superfluous to the end

He had in view; as He also abstained from giving to the powers He created that order in virtue of which they would in their development either produce good that was superfluous, or avoid evils that were useful or necessary to the great end.

But as regards *ceasing from action*, God, properly speaking, never ceases from that which He has once begun to do, unless the secondary cause rejects His gift, and renders itself incapable of receiving it. It was thus that our first parent separated himself from God and His grace; so that grace ceased to act in him, not as though it was itself wanting, but through the fault of man who forsook it.

571. By means of all these distinctions, we can explain the way in which God intervenes in the production of good and of evil in the universe, as well as understand those passages in Holy Writ in which God is said to be First Cause of evil also. (1)

572. Now, whether God acts as *positive cause*, or intervenes as *negative cause*, it is always by the Law of Wisdom that He is directed; it is always by the Law of the Least Means that His operation is determined. For He does only that which is certain to give Him the *maximum* of fruit, and therefore abstains from producing anything which He sees will not satisfy that condition. For the same reason He does not, in certain cases, prevent free moral evil (*culpa*) and penal evil; permitting the first, and, with regard to the second, abstaining from producing the activities, and in them

(1) Gen. xlv. 5, 8; Exod. vii. 3; Deuteron. ii. 30; II. Kings, xvi. 10; III. Kings, xii. 15; Job xii. 10, 17, 24, 25; Isa. x. 6; Jer. x. 23; Amos iii. 6; Acts ii. 23, iv. 27, 28; Rom. ix. 16, 18-20; I. Cor. iv. 7, xii. 6; Ephes. ii. 10; Philip. ii. 13.

the order, which would hinder its occurrence; because the production of those activities and that order would not, in those cases, be an action well employed, would not, all things considered, produce the *maximum* of fruit.

573. All these doctrines are of importance in connexion with the continuation of our argument. For, it is only by keeping well in mind a correct notion of what the positive and what the negative action of God is, that we can consider distinctly His Wisdom and His Goodness—whether He act as positive cause, or as negative cause, or as both these causes together; in which latter case, there arise those effects which are a mixture of entity and of limitation, of good and of evil. In the light of this clear notion we can meditate on His Infinite Wisdom as the regulator of these three modes of action, which result in the events that take place in the universe; and we can also see what in each circumstance we ought to expect it to suggest to His Infinite Goodness as the best thing to do.

We will now proceed to consider Wisdom, first, as the regulator of the *positive actions* and *dispositions* of God, and then as the regulator of the *negative* and *mixed* effects; from all which things combined there ensues the grand order of the universe.

As regards the positive actions and dispositions, let us begin by considering how God had to order and select the beings of the universe, and to what end to direct them. Afterwards we will consider the wonderful means which He had to bring into play for the attainment of that end: and it is in speaking of these means that we shall be called upon to enter on the subject of His negative and mixed dispositions.

CHAPTER XX.

FIFTH CONSEQUENCE.—IT WAS FITTING THAT GOD SHOULD PLACE THE BEINGS HE WILLED TO CREATE, IN CONNEXION WITH ONE ANOTHER SO AS TO FORM OF THEM A SINGLE HARMONIOUS WHOLE.

574. Assuming that God willed to create many beings, the fittingness of His placing them in relation and communication with one another, so that, being variously linked together, they might constitute a single whole, may be proved by many special reasons. These, however, are all reducible to the Law of the Least Means, or, at all events, this great law demands the connexion and unity of created things.

575. First of all, we see that each being, in order to subsist and develop itself, stands in need of other beings. Thus man requires various kinds of food, which are furnished to him by the animal and vegetable kingdom; he requires air to breathe, light to see, his fellow beings in order to multiply, to form societies, etc. All other animals, in like manner, stand in need of beings other than themselves for maintaining their subsistence and perpetuating their several species. The vegetables also depend on minerals, earth, water, various juices, to serve them as nourishment, various fluids in which to live, etc. If vegetables did not impregnate the air with oxygen and absorb the carbonic acid, the air would soon become unfit for

respiration; whilst the animals by exhaling the carbon supply that substance which sustains the life of plants. The fishes have need of water and of food suitable to their nature. Electricity, heat, and other imponderables are, again, necessary for the preservation of animal life. If there were no sun, everything on our globe would perish. So also the diurnal rotation of the earth upon its axis, and its annual revolution around the sun, have a special relation with the vital periods, and with those of pregnancy, etc. In short, it may be said that no living thing can stand by itself, and that the whole universe concurs in making each thing to exist, to endure, and to act for its own peculiar ends.

Now, it is true that if God had willed to separate beings from one another, He could have preserved them by dint of miracles wrought by his Omnipotence; but in that case their aptitudes for assisting and sustaining one another would have remained useless. There would, therefore, have been an immense expenditure of activity to no purpose. But the Law of the Least Means requires that no entity or activity should be wasted, that it should produce all the good it is capable of producing, being disposed and collocated by the governing intelligence in the place, time, and manner best adapted to this object. Consequently, the Law of Wisdom, which is that of the Least Means, would not have been observed, if God, instead of placing the various beings in suitable mutual relations, had isolated and dissociated them, and so taken away the possibility of their assisting and completing one another.

576. Moreover, from the connexion wisely ordained of the various beings, there follow two kinds of effects;

the one consisting of those which contribute to the production of final good, and may therefore be called *mediate goods*, or goods having the nature of *means;* the other consisting of those which have themselves the nature of end, and may therefore be called *final goods*. If God had not in His Wisdom placed beings in mutual connexion, neither the first nor the second of these classes of goods could have been obtained.

577. The mediate goods are those relating to the order of real beings, and of intellective beings. The final goods are those relating to the moral eudemonological order. Who does not see that from the mutual connexion of beings there proceed, in the real order, an infinity of effects which could not be had without it? Indeed, we may say that all the physical effects man can become acquainted with, spring from the connexion and composition of beings; for, what is there in the universe that is altogether simple and isolated from everything else? But all these effects, which God ordains as means to the final good, would be wholly lost if created beings were not placed in communication. We must also observe that, besides the different physical effects, beings as numerous as the various combinations of the atoms and of other beings can make them—and the number of these combinations exceeds all human reckoning—each effect, by a mere variation in the quantity, gives a new effect which would not be otherwise obtainable. Thus the forces of the same nature, if united, will give a result which they could never give uncombined. For example, if, wishing to move a block of granite, I apply a hundred degrees of force, but only in succession one after the

other, I shall fail in my object; but if I apply them all together, and in the same direction, I shall succeed. By burning simultaneously a large quantity of wood, I may very well warm a room; not so if I burn only one stick at a time. From the conjunction of beings, then, numberless new effects are obtained, varying in nature and quantity, each of which, being ordered by Infinite Wisdom, can yield some good.

578. The same must be said as regards the intellectual order.

Man is a being endowed by nature with the means of knowing, but is devoid at the first of all knowledge relating to *real beings* outside himself. His fundamental feeling, the modifications of this feeling, and the real beings which produce these modifications, constitute the first materials of the cognitions he acquires in succession, when, his attention being aroused, he applies the means of knowing *(indeterminate ideal being)* to these realities. Human knowledge could not, therefore, be developed and go on increasing unless corporeal realities acted upon man, stimulated him, produced his instincts and his wants. Consequently it was necessary that he should be surrounded by that universe from whence he takes the materials of his cognitions, whereon he afterwards institutes reasonings, which lift his mind up to the Creator, and to the contemplation of His Wisdom, Goodness, Perfection. All the cognitions which man thus obtains are so many occasions and means through which he can develop the affections of his heart, and hence act morally, practise virtue, and also gain merit. It is plain, therefore, that he required to be connected with the universe, to experience its action and to receive continual modifications from it.

Now, I grant that all these cognitions could have been communicated directly by God without man's being subjected to the action of the material universe, or himself exercising his action upon other beings. But in that case, the aptitude which human nature has of acquiring the knowledge of created beings, as also of itself acting on the universe, and instructing itself by its own experience, and at the same time of practising virtue, would have remained useless, a mere waste. So also would the aptitude which the various beings have by their nature of causing modifications in man, of supplying him with many cognitions, of affording him the occasion of perfecting himself by the practice of virtue. All this would run counter to the Law of the Least Means, and therefore in direct opposition to the mode of action essential to Divine Wisdom.

579. But let us briefly consider also those goods which have the nature of end, and which result from the conjunction and reciprocal action of beings.

580. Man cannot come to know the Cause of the universe as wise, save by contemplating the traces of wisdom that are found in it. Now, these traces are presented to him in the harmonious connexion of numberless beings which serve one another, forming a single whole, ordained to one sole end. This truth was known and proclaimed even by the philosophers anterior to the coming of Christ, especially those of the Italic School, who, to the complex of all things gave the name of κόσμος, and *mundus*, as if to signify the ornate, or the beautiful, *par excellence*,(1) and re-

(1) Thus we read in Pliny: *Quem κόσμον Graeci nomine ornamenti appellavere, eum nos a* PERFECTA ABSOLUTAQUE ELEGANTIA, *mundum* (Lib. II., c. iv). The same is said by Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, Lib. IX., c. 19.

garded this order and beauty of the universe as a most manifest proof of the existence of God, and the unity of this order as a proof of the unity of God, its Author. Hence, St. Thomas says: "The world is one for this reason, that all things must be ordained to one sole order and to one sole end. Wherefore Aristotle, in the twelfth Book of the Metaphysics, from the unity of the order existing in things, infers the unity of God Who governs them." (1) Thus the universe is, as it were, the book in which man learns the science that makes him capable of virtue; and the letters this book is written with are the beings of which the universe is formed and their reciprocal actions and passions, their affinities and repulsions which, taken together, constitute a most marvellous order and a stupendous harmony. No doubt God had the power to create man in an isolated state, and to show him the said order and harmony in Himself, and thus instruct him, without his having to avail himself for this purpose of the interaction of creatures. But this mode of proceeding (even if we imagine it possible) would have been opposed to the Law of the Least Means; since the aptitude which creatures have for presenting to man the traces of Divine Wisdom, and that which man has for deriving instruction from those traces, would have thus been useless and like riches thrown away. Hence, God would not have obtained from His creation that good which it was able to give Him.

581. Besides, if man had not been placed in communication with other creatures, and there had not been a continual interchange of action and passion between them and himself, he could not have been

(1) S. p. I. q. xlvii, art. 3.

rendered virtuous by the least means. It is from this universe in which he finds himself, that he is supplied, as with knowledge, so with the occasion of practising virtue, and advancing gradually by his own industry in moral perfection—that priceless treasure which is the sum of all the good man is capable of. For eudemonological good does not acquire the nature of true human good, save in so far as it is a continuation and a most fitting sequel of moral good. Without several individuals living together, the human species could neither have been multiplied, nor have displayed the social virtues, which are, properly speaking, the virtues of mankind. The use of the beings of the universe, and the good and the harm which they are occasions of to man, form the material in which are embodied all the moral virtues described by ethical philosophers—justice, fortitude, prudence, temperance. No useful enterprise, no heroic action, would be possible, if man had no companions upon earth; hence, God Himself has said: "It is not good for man to be alone." (1)

Moreover, all man's affections, wherein so large a part of his happiness consists, and all the innumerable pleasures which are afforded to him by the marvellous variety of so many creatures adapted to satisfy his natural tendencies, would in like manner have been impossible. But even as one of the greatest delights of the mind is the contemplation of the harmonious whole which Creative Wisdom produces out of such various and contrary things; so one of the greatest delights of the heart is that which individuals receive from society with their fellows, the one living in the

(1) Gen. ii. 18.

other by the sweet force of love; and beyond this, each individual, whose soul is informed by supernatural charity, lives and delights in all those who partake of the same charity. Thus is life multiplied in each, and augmented and accumulated without end.

582. Now, let it here again be granted, or rather, let us by a fiction of the imagination suppose, that God could have given man in another way the occasion of fully exercising virtue, of developing the affections of his heart, and of enjoying the spiritual delights of which he is susceptible. But how could He have done this? Only in two ways: either by means of creatures, or by an immediate revelation of Himself, wherein man might see Him as Essential Wisdom and Goodness, and thus feel prompted to love Him. If we say by means of creatures, we admit against our supposition that man is placed in relation with other beings; and this confirms our thesis. If we say by an immediate revelation of God Himself, we strike at once upon two rocks:—1st, this would be a glaring violation of the Law of the Least Means inasmuch as all those forces, tendencies, faculties, and cravings which are natural to man, and to which creatures are proportionate objects, would be without any sufficient reason, and would therefore be lost; 2nd, if God had revealed Himself to man immediately, and without a veil, man would have been constituted in a state of term, and therefore could have gained no merit, because devoid of liberty. Hence all the meritorious virtue of which he is capable would have been sacrificed. (1)

(1) It might be objected that God could have infused ideas into man without either giving him the vision of Himself or placing him in communication with other creatures. But this will not hold. In the first place,

583. Now if, for the reason we have indicated, it was fitting that finite beings should be placed in mutual communication, and that they should reciprocally act and re-act one upon the other, it follows that the result of this state of things must be, not good only, but evil also. For, as we have seen, every finite being, owing to the limitation of its nature, is susceptible of evil. And if we speak of physical or eudemonological evil, this must arise from the mutual action and reaction of forces. Indeed, the same force which produces pleasure, produces also pain, the difference in the effect depending simply on the different mode and degree in which it acts. But, to justify Divine Providence, it suffices that the evil be less in quantity than the good, so that when the balance is struck, there remain, as a net sum, the *maximum* of good possible. For, as we have so often said, the *maximum* of good is what Divine Providence proposes to itself to draw from the complex of creatures and their aptitudes, which are as it were the capital placed in traffic by the Divine Master, and which would

there would always be a violation of the Law of the Least Means, because the faculty which man possesses of forming ideas by the use of his senses would have been fruitless. In the second place, ideas do not suffice for the full exercise of virtue, because ideas give us only the knowledge of possible beings; whereas virtue is exercised principally towards real-intellective beings, which can be known only by means of *perceptions*. In the third place, mere ideas do not suffice for *happiness*, because happiness is not found save in a union with real beings. Even the angelic knowledge, before the Angels were admitted to the vision of God, must not be supposed to have consisted in mere ideas, but in positive affirmations of themselves and of other created beings, wherein they saw the vestiges of the Supreme Being. Hence St. Augustine teaches that the knowledge of the Angels went on increasing in proportion as God proceeded in the work of giving form and beauty to the universe. See *De Genes.*, Lib. III., c. xxxi., xxxii.

otherwise remain unemployed and like the talent buried in the earth. Now, no one will ever be able to prove that the physical good in the universe (to speak now only of this) is less than the evil; whilst, on the other hand, it is very easy to show that the quantity of good is incomparably the larger of the two, if only we consider that in this world good is the standing ordinary rule, and evil the exception. Thus life is good, because it is a pleasurable feeling, and death, which lasts but a moment, is evil; health is good, and sickness evil, and in sickness itself man is not deprived of all good, of all pleasure, and never of the feeling of his own existence, which, if it were not a good he would not love so much as to regard its loss as the extreme of evil. In general, every act is pleasurable, so that pain is nothing but an impediment which a sensitive nature meets with in putting forth its complete act. Hence we may say with all good reason that whatever is, is good, not only in a metaphysical sense, but also in a physical sense, inasmuch as there is no pain or unpleasantness which does not consist in some privation or failure in the act which is put forth, in its not arriving at its completion or not reaching the term to which it tends, and in which it finds its rest. The universe, therefore, is in fact nothing but a complex of goods which suffer some limitation and diminution from their co-existence and reciprocal actions.

584. Moreover, any one who wishes to cast up accurately the sum of the good in order to confront it with that of the evil, ought in the first place to distinguish each pleasure taken singly from *contentment*. (1)

(1) See *Society and its Aim* ("La Società ed il suo Fine"), Bk. IV., ch. 1—12.

As regards single pleasures, he ought to observe how there are some that could never be enjoyed unless they were preceded or accompanied by certain evils. For example, that peculiarly vivid pleasure which man experiences in being restored to health, would not be possible except on the condition of previous sickness. Hunger and thirst lend to food and drink a zest otherwise unknown. Repose and sleep are never so delightful as when a man is weary and exhausted, or has been long watching. And it may safely be affirmed in general that those who live in too great ease and self-indulgence are they who enjoy life least, and that the relish and flavour which the simple rustic finds in his humble fare and in quenching his thirst with a draught of water from the clear spring, exceeds by far those which the opulent *gourmand* seeks at his table, loaded each day with a superabundance of dainty viands, the choicest wines, and every luxury which money can purchase. This truth of common experience is so well known, that our two esteemed philosophers, Ortes and Verri, have thought, though erroneously, that pleasure should be defined in general as "nothing else than a cessation of pain." (1) Plato had hinted at the same definition; for we read in the *Phædo*, that on the day in which Socrates died, when the fetters had been removed from his feet, he, touching and rubbing the marks which were left, addressed the friends that stood around him in the following strain: "How wonderful, O men, does this thing seem which is called

(1) Before Verri published his book *Sul Piacere*, Ortes had defended the same paradox in an article entitled *Calcolo sopra il valore delle opinioni, e sopra i piaceri e i dolori della vita umana*, and inserted in the 24th Volume of the Periodical *Gli Economisti Italiani, Parte moderna.*

pleasure, and what a marvellous relation it naturally has with pain, to which, however, it seems so contrary that it refuses to be together with it in man! And yet if any one seeks and finds either of the two, he is almost always obliged to receive the other also, as if both were conjoined in one and the same apex." Then he makes the following excellent reflection: "Methinks," said he, "that if Æsop had observed this, he would have composed a fable upon it, namely, to the effect that God Himself, wishing to reconcile together things opposed to one another, and being unable to do so, joined their ends together; and that so it happens that whenever the one comes to a man, the other is sure to follow." Nothing could be expressed with greater elegance. In this Socratic or Platonic thought there lies a deep secret for investigation, of which we shall speak later. For the present, it will suffice to observe, that since pleasure, in the act in which it is acquired, is a movement or passage from a state less suitable to nature to a state that is more suitable and perfect, it follows that from pain there must necessarily come pleasure, and a greater pleasure in proportion to the greater painfulness of the condition from which sensitive nature rises in that act. The reason is, because an act is greater in proportion to the greater length of the way traversed by it, that is to say, according as the two extremes between which the passage takes place are wider apart. Again, the pleasure must be more vivid, the more rapidly that passage is made. From this, several consequences may be drawn very much to our purpose.

585. In the first place, we can see that, as every new act supposes the power of performing it, so an actual

pleasure suitable to human nature, supposes an inferior state from which this nature passes to a better. Now, this inferior state, although it is not always painful, is always at least a *limitation* peculiar to sensitive nature. Thus we can see where the error of the theory of Ortes and Verri lies. If, instead of deriving the act of pleasure from *pain*, they had derived it from the limitation and the deficiency of nature, they would have hit the mark.

586. In the second place, we can see that such is the limitation of human nature, that its most vivid pleasures are not attainable except on condition of its being subjected to pain. Hence it behoved the Supreme Providence, in accordance with the Law of the Least Means, which required that the various natures should yield all the good they can produce by their own forces and faculties, to permit that man should be liable to suffering; for, else human nature could not have enjoyed all the pleasures which it is susceptible of.

587. In the third place, we can see why it is that pleasures, when indulged in to excess, cause weariness, annoyance, injury to health, stupefaction—a new reason why Providence should have tempered and mingled them together with their contraries.

588. Sufferings, however, ought to be considered not merely in relation with single acts of pleasure, but also in relation with man's interior satisfaction and contentment. If this is done, one must indeed be ignorant of the nobility of man's spiritual nature, not to recognize the existence of that power with which man has been endowed by the Creator, and through which he is able to overcome pain by the constancy of his temper and the strength of his will, and even to prefer

it to pleasure, and so change it from an evil into a good. Leibnitz, after touching upon the teaching of the Stoics, and quoting the sentence of Descartes, that "even in the saddest accidents and the most excruciating sufferings, man can always be contented, if only he knows how to use reason," (1) goes on to refute Peter Bayle, who, satirically objecting that "this was a remedy of which hardly anybody knew the preparation," disowned the most precious riches of human nature, and for all its unhappiness blamed God Himself, instead of blaming the cowardice of man, who does not make use of the gifts he has within himself. He tells him plainly that the remedy in question is more possible than it seems. "For," says he, "not to speak of the true martyrs, and of those who are extraordinarily aided from on high, there have been some false ones who have imitated them. Take as an example that Spanish slave who, to avenge his master, killed the governor of Carthagena, and, in the midst of the most cruel tortures, showed a joy which may well put philosophers to shame. Why will it not be possible for others to attain to what this man attained? Indeed, it may be said of fortune no less than of misfortune:

Cuivis potest accidere, quod cuiquam potest.

But even at this day whole nations, as the Hurons, the Iroquois, the Galibis, and other peoples in America, give us excellent lessons on this point. It is impossible to read without astonishment with what intrepidity and, as it were, insensibility, they brave their enemies, who roast them at a slow fire and eat them piece by piece. If these peoples could preserve the advantages

(1) Descartes' Works, Vol. I., Letter ix.

of body and heart, adding to them the knowledge we possess, they would surpass us in every way,

Extat ut in mediis turris aprica casis.

In our midst they would be as a giant by the side of a dwarf, as a mountain by the side of a hill:

Quantus Eryx, et quantus Athos, gaudetque nivali
Vertice se attollens pater Apenninus ad auras.

"All the wonderful things which an extraordinary vigour of body and of spirit can do in these savages piqued on a point of honour, might be acquired by ourselves by education, by suitable mortifications, by a dominant joy founded on reason, by making it a point always to maintain a certain presence of mind amid the distractions and impressions most calculated to disturb it. Something of this kind is related of the ancient sect known as the Assassins, subjects and disciples of the famed 'Old Man of the Mountain.'

"The Gymnosophists of ancient India had perhaps something similar; and that Galanus who exhibited to Alexander the Great the spectacle of having himself burnt alive, had doubtless been inspired with that extraordinary courage by the great example of his teachers, and had sustained the ordeal of most grievous sufferings in order not to fear pain. The Indian Suttees, in like manner, who to this day ask to be burnt together with the dead bodies of their husbands, appear still to retain some of the courage of those ancient philosophers of the country." (1)

589. God, then, has placed in man a force which renders him superior to pain, and by which he some-

(1) Leibnitz, *Théod.* iii., 255–257.

times chooses pain as preferable to pleasure, and adapted to satisfy his aspirations. Hence Divine Providence could not have allowed this interior force, which so ennobles man, and whose act he himself desires with marvellous ardour, to remain idle. And, in order that the sublime act to which it is ordained might be produced, it was necessary that there should not be wanting suitable occasions, namely, great and even extreme sufferings. Accordingly, we are once more bound to conclude, that if the Creator had, by His omnipotence, hindered physical evils, He would not have acted wisely, because not in accordance with the Law of the Least Means, which requires that nature should yield, and in the fullest measure, all the kinds of good which it can possibly be made to yield by all its powers and all its acts.

590. But how much stronger does the force of these observations become when we consider the *moral good* which man may obtain through the experience of sufferings? I have spoken of this before, and here it will suffice to remember that this kind of good, having the nature of end, is incomparably more excellent than all other kinds, which must be regarded as having only the nature of means.

591. To this we must add the fact, that the physical sufferings of an individual not only are an occasion from which he may, if he will, draw very great good for himself; but they also afford to all those who are cognizant of them, opportunities of acquiring a practical knowledge of human nature, of exercising the virtue of beneficence.

592. It is true that if man had persevered in innocence, as God had created him, there would have

been no physical evils upon this earth; since it would have been out of harmony with the Divine Sanctity to permit that a nature wholly free from guilt and sanctified by God Himself should be in any way afflicted. But this entire absence of physical evil would not have been due simply to human nature and the material forces; for these things, although distributed with supreme wisdom, could not, owing to their limitation, co-exist without coming into collision and hurting one another. It would have been owing to a special Providence which, through the action of creatures superior to man, as the angels are, removed from mortal man death and all other bodily afflictions. As however, under this system, it was not possible, either to fulfil the Law of the Least Means, or to draw from the faculties and the acts possible to man, and from the corresponding actions and passions of the rest of the world, all the good which they could produce; so Divine Wisdom, always supremely perfect in its counsels, permitted that man should be tempted by the seducing spirit, and fall. Thus was the field thrown open to all the development of which human nature is susceptible, and to the production of that immensely greater good which Divine Goodness had decreed to draw from this nature.

593. Now, in this new order of Providence, wherein all kinds of evil have a place, as well as all kinds of good, both physical and moral, to which, through the Restoration wrought by Christ, they could give rise, natural causes were so distributed at the beginning that they should produce physical evils in those ways, in those times, in that number and in that degree,

which might, all things considered, result at last in the production of the greatest moral, and consequently in the greatest eudemonological, good of humanity. Some of the laws of that distribution have already been expounded in Book II.

CHAPTER XXI.

SIXTH CONSEQUENCE.—IT WAS FITTING THAT THE UNIVERSE SHOULD BE ORDERED ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF CONTINUITY OR GRADATION.

Ad divinam providentiam pertinet, ut gradus entium qui possibiles sunt adimpleantur.

St. Thomas, Contr. Gent. Lib. III., c. lxxii., 2.

594. The principle of the Law of the Least Means leads us to another important consequence—I mean to the famous Law of Continuity amongst beings, upon which so much light was thrown by Leibnitz. Let us see how this law follows from what has been said.

595. God, in determining to create contingent beings, could only propose to Himself a finite production. Not indeed that He was wanting in power; but the limitation inherent in these beings and in the nature of numbers necessarily rendered an infinite production a contradiction in terms. Hence the absurdity of pretending to raise questions as to why God created one quantity of beings rather than another quantity, and such and such kinds of beings rather than other kinds (490, 491). The amount of entity which God has thought fit to bring into existence ought, on the contrary, to be regarded as a primitive *datum;* and the only thing that we can reasonably demand is, that "He, as supremely wise,

should draw from that entity all the good which it could possibly yield, by distributing it in the manner best suited for the purpose."

596. Of what kind and amount, then, is the entity which God proposed to Himself to create and did actually create?

It results from a great many things, all of them reducible, so far as we know, to three elementary and primitive species, namely, 1st, *Material elements;* 2nd, *Sensitive principles;* 3rd, *Intellective principles.*

597. From these species, as we have seen, the Law of the Least Means requires that God should draw all the good which it is possible for them to give. But in order to this, none of their forces, aptitudes, passions and modifications, from which any good can be obtained, must be allowed to run to waste. Hence in the preceding chapter we concluded that it was fitting that God should not leave beings isolated one from another, but should unite them in a simple harmonious whole, placing them in mutual contact, so that by acting and reacting upon and modifying one another, they might exercise all their aptitudes and faculties, and thus, each in its own way, contribute something to the sum total of good.

By a similar process of reasoning we also come to see very clearly, that God, in consideration of the same law of fittingness, formed with the three elementary species we have named all the beings which they could produce, combining them in all possible ways; and this for the very reason that each such combination was a new entity which His Sovereign Wisdom could turn to some account. The only exception to this rule would be when some combination could not

be made to harmonize with the universal order; in which case the omission of that combination would, of course, be justified.

598. Assuming, therefore, that those three specific elements had to be combined and intermingled in all possible ways, lest any of their capabilities and aptitudes should be lost, it is manifest that the result must be the Law of Continuity amongst beings. In other words, the universe must embrace a *continuous gradation* of beings from the most simple to the most composite, from the lowest to the highest; so far as Infinite Wisdom saw that the successive steps of the gradation within the sphere of the said three elements could be carried into effect consistently with the end of the universe itself.

599. This law does not hinder the natures of the three elements from remaining inconfusably distinct. Their natures are unchangeable, because each element corresponds to a different idea, the foundation of a different species. Indeed, if the material atom were changed into a sensitive principle, it would, *ipso facto*, cease to be what it is. So in like manner, if the sensitive principle, in so far as sensitive, were changed into an intellective principle, it would no longer, as such, be a sensitive principle; so that, to use an Aristotelian expression often repeated by the Schoolmen, the three elements in question "differ as numbers differ."

600. They may, however, be variously combined, according to their reciprocal affinities. As regards the material element, I believe—on grounds which I must reserve for discussion in another place—that it is always informed by feeling, and that the animated

atoms form the animal as soon as the suitable organization supervenes. The animal principle, on the other hand, may be conjoined with intelligence, in which case the two principles acquire a common root. This is what takes place in man.

601. But as this conjunction is not necessary, intelligence may also exist apart from animality. Such is the case with human souls deprived of their body, although they preserve the root of the animal principle. The Angels, likewise, are pure intelligences; and to attribute a body to them would be a wholly gratuitous assertion. Leibnitz, Bonnet, as well as other philosophers, both ancient and modern, (1) fall

(1) St. Thomas observes that "The ancients, through not having formed a true concept of the intellective power *(ignorantes vim intelligendi)*, and of the difference between SENSE and INTELLECT, supposed that nothing existed in the world save what could fall under the sense and the imagination. And since nothing falls under the imagination except bodies, they considered that bodies were the only beings in existence" (S. p. I., q. l., art. 1). Of this gross way of thinking of the ancients Aristotle speaks in the fourth book of the Physics. Hence arose among the Jews the error of the Sadducees, who disbelieved in spirits. But although this error was vanquished, there remained in many minds an extreme difficulty to conceive the existence of intellective substances wholly separate from corporeal matter. From this came a second error, that of conceiving God to be the soul of the world; but this error also was excluded by the teaching of Christian Faith. A third thought, therefore, succeeded: namely, that all spirits, God alone excepted, were clothed with some kind of body. We meet with this thought in Origen (περὶ ἀρχῶν, Lib. I., c. vi.); of whom St. Thomas writes: "Seeing that this" (the attributing of a body to God) "is opposed to the Catholic Faith, which teaches that God is exalted above all things, according to that of the Psalmist: Thy magnificence is elevated above the heavens, (Ps. viii. 2.); Origen refused to say it of God; but as regards other spirits, he held the same view as others did. And herein he was deceived, as he also was in many other points, in consequence of his following the opinions of the ancient Philosophers" (S. p. I., q. li., art. 1.). St. Augustine also (although, as St. Thomas observes, "not by way of positive affirmation, but simply as making use of the opinion of the Platonists") described the

into this mistake. Either from inability to form a correct notion of a purely spiritual being, or from other causes, they maintained that every intelligence must necessarily be clothed with some kind of body, however subtile its composition might be. But they did not reflect that a body, whether subtile or dense, is always a body, always a thing relative to our corporeal senses; and hence, never approaches spirituality in any way, the difference between body and spirit being one not of degree, but of nature.

602. The angelic Doctor proves the fittingness that pure spirits should not be wanting in creation by a reason which comes very near that which we give in proof of the Law of Continuity. It is that in the scale of beings there must not be missing the highest grade which attains the end of the universe more fully than the other grades do. He says: "That which is accidental to a nature is not always found in that nature. For example, to have wings does not belong to every animal; because the having wings is not essential to the concept of an animal. Now, since understanding is not the act of a body nor of any

devils as animals clothed with an ethereal body (Ep. Lib. I. Ep. ix.—*De Gen. ad lit.*, Lib. iii., c. x.). Later on St. Gregory the Great (perhaps as St. Thomas opines, by metaphor) calls the Angels by the name of rational animals (Hom. x. *De Epiphania*). St. John Damascene wrote: "The Angel is said to be incorporeal and immaterial with respect to us; but as compared with God, he is corporeal and material" (*De Fid Orthod.*, Lib. ii., c. iii.). Even St. Bernard, as late as the twelfth century, wrote: "As we attribute immortality to God alone, so to Him alone we attribute incorporeity. For His nature has no need of the aid of a corporeal instrument, either for Himself or for others" (*Sup. Cant. Serm.* vi.). So difficult is it to conceive a pure spirit existing without the vesture of some body! I shall in the proper place demonstrate that the Angels, although pure spirits, have a certain contact of action with bodies.

corporeal virtue, it follows that to have a body is not essential to the intellective substance, as such, but this comes to it as an accidental circumstance for some other reason. Thus it belongs to the human soul to be united with a body, because in the genus of intellective substances this soul is imperfect and exists in a potential state, inasmuch as it has not the fulness of knowledge in its nature, but must acquire it from sensible things by means of bodily senses. Now, in every genus where imperfection is found there must have pre-existed something perfect. Of substances having an intellective nature, therefore, there are some perfectly intellectual, that is to say, not needing to acquire knowledge from sensible things." (1)

This reason is conclusive only on the supposition that Divine Wisdom and Goodness, by which the universe is ordered, require the Law of Continuity. For, without this supposition, it would be impossible to prove the principle that "What is accidental to a nature must necessarily be subject to variation, so as sometimes to occur, and sometimes not." All that could be shown of such variation would be that it is possible, not that it is necessary. Neither could St. Thomas have distinctly laid it down that in the universe there must be pure spirits, for the reason that a pure spirit is perfection in the genus of intellective beings; for, one might easily have replied that perfection in the genus of intellective beings is God Himself. Hence we find that St. Thomas himself has recourse to this wisdom and goodness when arguing as follows: "What God chiefly proposes to Himself in created things is their good, which consists in

(1) S. p. I., q. li., art. 1.

likeness to Him. Now, the likeness of the effect to its cause is conceived to be perfect when the effect imitates the cause in that by which the cause produces the effect, as for example heat produces heat. Now, God produces the creature by intellect and will. Consequently, FOR THE PERFECTION OF THE UNIVERSE, it is requisite that there should be some intellective creatures. But intellection cannot be the act of a body or of any corporeal virtue; because each body is limited to a particular time and place *(ad hic et nunc)*. It is therefore necessary to concede that, in order that THE UNIVERSE MAY BE PERFECT, there must be in it some incorporeal creature." (1) On this passage it is well to note that the Holy Doctor very often supposes in his reasonings that the *universe is perfect*, because otherwise the work would not correspond with the Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power of the Artificer Who formed it. Hence it is to me a matter of wonder that there should be writers who are at great pains to impugn so manifest a truth, and who do not see that there is an Optimism which is most reasonable.

603. From the fact, therefore, that it was fitting that from the three elements of which creation is formed, God should draw all the good which they could yield by their various combinations, modifications, faculties, and acts, there springs, as we have seen, that Law of Gradation, or Continuity, which we observe in the universe. This law has two parts: 1st, the *greatest number of species* which can be realized without being confused one with the other; 2nd, within the same species, the *greatest number of*

(1) S. p. I., q. li., art. 1.

grades, according as the individual beings partake of that species more or less fully.

604. The first part explains why creation is seen to be formed, 1st, of atoms which give no sign of sensitive life; 2nd, of brute animals; 3rd, of intellective animals; 4th, of pure spirits. The first two species may, in my opinion, be reduced to one, inasmuch as they differ only by organization; while the intellective animal is that middle link which conjoins the two extremes, the brute and the Angel.

605. The second part of the same law explains why each of those three or four species of beings expands into a gradation which is as it were infinite. The minerals, compounded and re-compounded in all conceivable ways, exhibit various forms, properties, and aptitudes, and some of them so constant that they cannot be changed by any of the natural forces which are, so far, known to us; and for this reason they are regarded as so many scientific species. (1) I refer to those fifty-eight or fifty-nine "Elements" which chemical analysis has succeeded in discovering up to the present time. (2) The animals, in like manner, present themselves to us in so graduated a series, that the scale of fixed types, taken by naturalists as so many species, begins where the vestiges of life are almost imperceptible and doubtful, and ends with

(1) I call *scientific*, or *supposed*, those species which are taken as different because they exhibit in themselves something constant which separates them one from the other. This, however, is not sufficient to constitute a true diversity of species; for a species is constituted solely by an act essentially different from that of any other species, as I have shown in the *Origin of Ideas* (n. 646–659).

(2) In the year 1844.— *Tr.*

man; nor, it would seem, are any of the intermediate links wanting.

606. Lastly, the Angels, as Revelation tells us, are divided into innumerable Choirs and Legions, the successive gradations of whose natures are not known to us, but are certainly, in quality and number, beyond our powers of conception. And there is reason to believe that the scale of the Angelic intelligences is immeasurably more extended than that which we see in the sensible universe, and that one Angel is, by sublimity and excellence of nature, more distant from another, than one star is from another which is most remote from it.

607. By means of this doctrine we can also answer a difficulty which might occur to the mind, namely: "How to an intellective being who stretches forth unto the infinite, and is by nature immortal, God could conjoin an entity so limited as is that of the corporeal nature." For, this composite being, man, is readily seen to be necessary in virtue of the Law of the Least Action, which is essential to Wisdom. It is necessary as a link in the chain of beings, whereby God draws all the good possible from the three elementary entities, *matter*, *animal feeling*, and *intelligence;* and not only from each of them separately, but also from their conjunction and various combinations. Here it should be observed that matter and the animal feeling are, by being united with intelligence, exalted, ennobled, made its instruments, and partakers of moral perfection and of happiness. For, the progression of contingent being is, first, from nothingness to existence, and then from the imperfect to the perfect, that is to say, from matter to feeling, from feeling to intelligence.

This progression was hinted at by the Aristotelian definition, "Man is an intellective animal;" which definition is true, if taken to mean, "Man is an animal raised to the state of an intellective being." And if in this elevation of the purely animal being unto the state of an intelligence, the animality is found not to be co-extensive with the vastness of the intelligence, this is an inevitable consequence of those limitations inherent in finite nature which not even the Divine Omnipotence could prevent, because they are contained in the *essences* of beings; and essences cannot be altered even by God, since such alteration would imply a change in His own essence. Hence the Angelic Doctor: "In matter, two conditions must be distinguished: the one which is chosen by reason of its suitableness to the form; the other which follows necessarily from the first. Thus the artificer, when he wants to make a saw, chooses steel for his material, because of its fitness to saw hard substances: but that the teeth of the saw should be liable to be blunted and to become rusty, this follows from the nature of the material used. In a similar way, it is fitting that intellective souls should be furnished with a body of equable complexion; but from the fact of this body being formed of matter, it follows that it is necessarily subject to corruption. And if anyone should object that God could have avoided this necessity, the reply would be that in the constitution of natural things, we must not consider what God could have done, but WHAT WAS REQUIRED BY THE NATURE OF THINGS, as St. Augustine says." (1) This is the same as to say that God acts, not according to the measure of

(1) S. p. I., q. lxxvi., art. 1.

His Power, but according to the laws of His Wisdom. To which we may add, that the production of an organic body incorruptible by nature, would be an absurdity; although God might preternaturally preserve it from the corruption to which it would be subject by nature, as in fact He had disposed to do in the primitive institution of mankind.

CHAPTER XXII.

SEVENTH CONSEQUENCE.—IT WAS FITTING THAT THE UNIVERSE SHOULD BE ORDERED ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF VARIETY IN THE ACTUATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF BEINGS.

608. From the principle that Divine Wisdom—because incapable by its very nature of deviating in its decrees from the Law of the Least Means—must draw the greatest fruit possible from creation, we have inferred the necessity of the Law of Continuity amongst the beings forming the universe. By the same kind of reasoning we can also prove irrefragably the necessity of the *Law of Variety in the actuations and modifications of these beings.*

609. This law requires creatures to be so disposed, that, combined and grouped together in all possible ways, they shall receive all the modifications of which they are susceptible, and shall do all the various acts which they are fitted to do, in so far as Divine Wisdom can draw from each some good tending to increase the complex sum of the total good. Now, if in any creature whatever there were even one modification possible, one aptitude, one act from which God could obtain some such good, no matter how small, and He omitted to obtain it, He would, for the reason we have so often stated, fail to fulfil the law essentially prescribed by His Infinite Wisdom.

610. Seeing, then, that Divine Wisdom is well able to utilize every variety of movements and of acts, we are bound to conclude that in created beings there are all

the varieties possible; saving the case in which a given variety could not be made to fall in with the order of the universe, and with the attainment of the *maximum* of good for which this order is destined: as to which case, indeed, I cannot prove that it is impossible; but it does not seem to me probable.

Every *essence*, therefore, of created things must be realized and represented in the universe, clothed with all possible varieties of accidents capable of yielding some increase of good. Hence created beings must be therein found in all states possible, from the lowest to the highest, and in all acts from the most imperfect to the most perfect, and in all the relations which one being can have with others specifically different from itself. (1)

611. From this it follows that, as every created nature, owing to the *limitation* necessarily inherent in it, is susceptive of a certain number of imperfect states and of a certain number of acts which fail to attain their term (in which failure evil consists), all these defective states and acts also will occur in the

(1) Observation of the beings forming the universe confirms this truth, which can be proved also *a priori* by arguing from the Law of Wisdom. This variety in nature was noticed also by the ancients, amongst them by Seneca, who in a letter wrote as follows:—"Among all the reasons for which THE MIND OF THE DIVINE ARTIFICER is wonderful, I reckon this also, that He never makes any two things that are quite the same. Even those things which seem similar, when carefully examined, are found to be different. Of the countless leaves on the trees there is not one which is not marked by some peculiarity of its own; and the same may be said of animals."—"*Inter cætera, propter quæ mirabile* DIVINI ARTIFICIS INGENIUM *est, hoc quoque existimo, quod in tanta copia rerum nunquam in idem incidit. Etiam quæ similia videntur, cum contuleris, diversa sunt; tot facit genera foliorum, nullum non sua proprietate signatum; tot animalia, nulli similitudo cum altero convenit.*"

universe, that is to say, if Divine Wisdom can draw any good from them. Of a certainty, there is not a single evil in the universe which Infinite Wisdom does not turn to good account, as has been so often repeated after St. Augustine, who said so forcibly and showed so clearly that: *Deus utitur et malis bene*—"God makes good use even of evils."

612. Indeed, to how large an extent physical evils help man to practise virtue, even heroic virtue, we have already seen. That even the moral perversity of some men affords to others a great and continual occasion of exercising themselves in the virtues of patience, of charity, of zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of their very persecutors, is a truth of every day experience. Nay, so constituted is human nature, that contraries produce contraries; so that the well-disposed would not have so clear a knowledge, nor, consequently, so strong a love of the beauty of virtue, unless the deformity of vice were presented to them in such vivid colours as to fill them with horror at the sight, and unless they beheld vice, proudly rearing up its head against virtue, and even against God, as it were to dethrone Him. At this shameful spectacle, men of good will feel stirred up from their inmost hearts to rush bravely to their own defence, to the defence of humanity, and, if I may be allowed to say so, of God Himself, that is, of His external glory, and, if vice should endure to the end, even to the avenging of eternal justice, according to the word of Holy Scripture, "And the whole world shall fight with Him against the unwise." (1)

If, therefore, so powerful an incitement as that

(1) Wisd. v. 21.

which the wicked give to the practice of the sublimest virtue were taken away from the world, an immense quantity of virtuous actions would be lost, and the number of the elect would itself be diminished. This we are given to understand in the parable of the cockle and the wheat, where Christ says plainly that the tares which the enemy had sown could not be rooted up without doing grievous injury to the good wheat, which would be rooted up with them. (1) Hence the same Divine Master adds, that to secure the *maximum* of good, which is intended by the Goodness of God, it was necessary that scandals should be permitted: "IT MUST NEEDS BE that scandals come."(2) Here, too, I may observe that the *necessity* of which Christ speaks in this place, is not an *absolute*, or *metaphysical*, as it is called, but only a *hypothetical* necessity, that is to say, dependent upon the supposition that it is proposed to draw from created things the *maximum* of complex good possible. This is explained by Christ Himself in the words which follow: "But nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh." These words clearly show that man is not by nature under any necessity, either metaphysical or physical, of sinning, but that the first cause of all moral evil lies in his free-will. Unquestionably, the good which God has at all times drawn in favour of humanity from heretics and from impious and wicked men is beyond calculation; and no writer has illustrated this truth more admirably than St. Augustine. (3)

(1) Matt. xiii. 29. (2) Matt. xviii. 7.—Luke xv. 7, 10.

(3) Here is one of the many passages which we find upon this subject in the works of the Holy Doctor: "But inasmuch as it has been said most truly: 'There must be also heresies, that they who are approved may be

613. Besides, very many of the wicked are converted and saved; and we have observed that the act of the human will moving towards virtue is the greater, the more profound is the depth of sin from which it moves. Hence under this respect there is no greater good than the conversion of a sinner; so that we are told that "the Angels in heaven rejoice upon it more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance;" (1) and they do so because the angelic wisdom can properly appreciate the moral greatness of that act.

614. Others are lost; but these also are necessary to the perfection of the universe, to the great end which God has proposed to Himself, of drawing from human nature all the good which it can be made to produce. For, who will ever be in a position to deny that God can turn to excellent purpose even the loss of the reprobate? True, the ways in which He can draw good from them are, in great part, unknown to us; but in part too we are also permitted to know

made manifest among you,' (1 Cor. xi. 19), let us take advantage also of this benefit of Divine Providence. For, those become heretics, who, even if they were in the Church, would go astray. But being outside, they are of very great use, not indeed by teaching the truth, of which they are ignorant, but by exciting carnal-minded Catholics to seek the truth and spiritual-minded ones to expound it to others. For, in the holy Church of God there are innumerable men who are approved of God, but do not become known amongst us so long as, feeling satisfied with the darkness of our unskilfulness we choose to sleep rather than to fix our gaze on the light of truth. Thus is it that many are by means of heretics aroused to vigilance, that they may see and enjoy the day of God. Let us, therefore, make use of heretics also, not by approving their errors, but by maintaining against them the Catholic discipline, being made more vigilant and cautious, although we may not be able to bring them back to salvation" (*De Vera Relig.*, c. viii.).

(1) Luke xv. 7.

them. Besides serving as a stimulus to virtue, how many other useful reflections does not the terror of eternal sufferings suggest to the good, both passing through this life and dwelling in eternal beatitude? Some of these reflections are expressed by St. Augustine thus: "Let us give thanks to Our Saviour, seeing that there has not been rendered to us what by the damnation of our fellow men, we well know would be our due. For, if every man had been saved, that would certainly remain hidden which is in justice due to sin; and if all were lost, that which grace freely bestows would not be known. To use therefore in this most difficult question the words of the Apostle rather than our own: 'God, willing to *shew* His wrath, and to *make His power known*, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He *might shew* the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy.'(1) In which words we see that all this mass [of mankind] being deservedly condemned, God renders *by justice* the shame which is due, and *by grace* the honour which is not due, that is to say, not by prerogative of merit, not by necessity of fate, not BY THE CAPRICE OF FORTUNE, but by the depth of that riches of His wisdom and knowledge which the Apostle does not explain, but contemplates in its hidden state, exclaiming in amazement: 'O the depth of the WISDOM and of the knowledge of God.'"(2) Here it should be observed, that by the *wrath of God*, of which the Holy Scriptures speak in connexion with this subject, are meant the *penal consequences* which naturally—that is to say, in virtue of the intrinsic

(1) Rom. ix. 22, 23.

(2) Rom. xi. 33.—Epist. cxliv., c. 2.

order of being—follow sin. (1) It should also be observed that the good which the Apostle, and St. Augustine who quotes his authority, ascribe to the punishments of the reprobate, consists precisely, as we have said, in their serving as a salutary instruction to man, who, but for them, *would not understand* how evil a thing sin is, how inviolable is justice, how great the Power of God to avenge it, how great His Mercy, and how gratuitous the grace of salvation.

True it is that God could infuse all this knowledge into man by a direct act of His Omnipotence. But in that case the good which such knowledge imparts would not be produced by the creature, although it might be produced by it. Some of the aptitudes of the creature would therefore remain fruitless, in manifest opposition to the Law of Wisdom. It is also true that, as we have likewise observed, not all the design of God's Wisdom is disclosed to us; so that here, as in all religious mysteries, we know in part, and in part we are left in darkness; whence the exclamation of the Apostle: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!" (2) Nevertheless, we understand enough of that design to conclude that what God disposes, He does not dispose at random, or, as St. Augustine says, by the caprice of fortune, but invariably in accordance with the Law of Wisdom, the Law of the Least Means. Hence, we see that the reason why the Apostle calls God's judgments in-

1) See the Author's *Treatise on Conscience* ("Trattato della Coscienza Morale"), n. 108.

(2) Rom. xi. 33.

comprehensible, and His ways unsearchable, is not because they set the Law of Wisdom aside to follow a blind will, but because they fulfil this law so faithfully and with such marvellous constancy, that the mind of no man on this earth can fathom them, or embrace their boundless compass.

615. We may be still more convinced of this, if we consider the good which the just punishment of the reprobate causes in the blessed in heaven, seeing as they do, without any veil, how all the parts of the universe, from the lowest to the highest, are linked together in a most harmonious whole; how even devils and wicked men contribute to the sanctification of the just; how the equilibrium of violated justice is restored by punishment; how justice triumphs over all the opposition of which the creature that combats it by its own forces is capable; how all good comes from God alone, and all evil from the creature trusting in itself; how in the kingdom of God's sanctity dwelling in their very essences they themselves reign supreme over all who have placed and still place their hopes in evil doing; and, finally, how an order of such holiness and such unity is produced by a Providence which aims at nothing but good, and consequently at the *maximum* of good, to which, however, the necessary limitation of created being imposes as a condition—equally necessary, equally unavoidable—the existence of evil. These things, contemplated and felt by those souls who have realized in themselves the end of the universe, and for whose advantage the entire universe has served and continues to serve, produce in them a happiness which it is beyond the power of human language to express, and make them break forth into rapturous praises of the Creator, Whose face they behold.

616. Let us, therefore, here also conclude with those two great authorities, St. Thomas and St. Augustine, the first of whom, in perfect agreement with the second, writes: "If all evils were hindered, much good would be lost to the universe. Thus, for example, there would not be the life of the lion, if there were not the slaying of animals, and there would not be the patience of martyrs, if there were no persecution by tyrants. Accordingly, St. Augustine in the *Enchiridion* (Ch. xi.) says: 'Almighty God would not permit any evil in His works, unless His Power and His Goodness were so great that He could draw good even from evil.'" (1)

(1) S. p. I., q. xxii., art. ii., ad. 2m.—See also on the same subject St. Thomas, *C. Gent.*, Lib. iii., c. lxxi.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONTINUATION.—THE LAW OF WISDOM HAS FOR ITS END THE COMPLETE REALIZATION OF THE SEVERAL SPECIES, NOT THE MULTIPLICATION OF INDIVIDUALS.—LAW OF EXCLUDED EQUALITY.

Particularia sunt propter naturam universalem : cujus signum est, quod in his in quibus potest natura universalis conservari per unum individuum, non sunt multa individua unius speciei.

St. Thomas, *C. Gent.*, L. III., c. lxxv., 6.

617. In order to render the two preceding Laws of *Continuity* and of *Variety* still more clear, and to remove all difficulty which might arise in the mind of the reader against the doctrines which have been set forth, it will be well, before proceeding further, to say something upon another Cosmic Law, which I call the *Law of Excluded Equality*.

618. This law implies that there cannot be in all creation two intellective individuals of the species, who are, in their final state, perfectly similar in all their accidents and relations. Taken as we conceive it, this law has a certain affinity to, but is not identical with, that more general principle which Leibnitz designated as the Principle of "Indiscernibles."

619. To avoid all ambiguity, therefore, I shall here point out the different kindred questions which may be raised about the inequality of individuals belonging to the same species.

First question :—Is it possible for any two or more individuals of the same species to be wholly similar in

all respects—in their *substance*, in their *accidents*, and even in their *reality*?—*Answer*. The multiplicity of individuals equal in this manner is excluded by metaphysical necessity; inasmuch as it would take away the very thing which is the principle of individuality and of multiplicity, and which consists in the reality of each individual being different from that of every other. (1)

620. *Second question*:—Is it possible for two or more individuals of the same species to co-exist, different only in their respective reality and individuality, but perfectly alike in all the rest, in their *substance*, in their *accidents*, and in their relations, *active* and *passive*, with other beings?—*Answer*. This kind of likeness cannot be proved to be metaphysically impossible. The difference between these individuals could not be discerned by the other intelligent beings to which they are related in the same manner. It would, however, be discerned by God, Whose action in creating them would have had two terms instead of one, I mean the two realities produced. So likewise if there were question of intellective beings, each of them, in perceiving its equals, would have discriminated them from itself, through the consciousness of its own reality. Now, if one of these beings knows the others as equal to itself, each must needs also know the others, and know them in a similar way; otherwise there would no longer be in them the equality supposed by the hypothesis. The possibility, however, of intellective beings equal to one another to such a degree, may only be conceived to

(1) I have already said elsewhere that in my opinion the *principle of individuation* is constituted by *reality*. See *Anthropology* ("Antropologia"), Bk. iv., c. 1., art. v.

last for an instant. That the equality should be regularly maintained in their developments and in their relations with other beings, subject like them to development and to changes, seems altogether inconceivable. For, in order to this, not only would they all have to proceed by acts perfectly similar, but the other beings also by which they are surrounded would have to maintain the very same kind of relation with each of them; and this, given the connexion of beings of which we have spoken, is an impossibility—unless we were to suppose that there existed two worlds equal to one another, in both of which the same identical accidental combinations were repeated with perfect uniformity. This supposition, however, is inadmissible because (even leaving aside the diversity of place) it would clash with the principle we have indicated above, of the unity of the world, and also, as we shall see, with the principle of Excluded Equality.

621. *Third question*:—Can there be conceived two possible realities equal to one another, and God creating only one of them?—*Answer.* I believe that the case is conceivable; we may conceive, for example, that God could have created, instead of Adam, another human being, similar to Adam in all things, his individuality only excepted. This, however, requires explanation.

The *idea* is one and the same for all perfectly similar individuals; (1) but the *subsistent reality* is not included in the idea, (2) and much less is it the idea itself, as

(1) See essay on the *Origin of Ideas*, no. 1117.—King had already said this in his work on *Evil*.

(2) *Ibid.* 406, 407.

Hegel erroneously maintained. Where, then, does the Creator find the reality of things? Certainly not in their idea, but in His own Almighty Will,(1) whereby He creates them. But the reality which He creates does not in any way exhaust His creative power. This always remains capable of creating new realities. Accordingly, one and the same idea may have an infinity of perfectly similar individuals corresponding to it (unless the nature of the being which forms the term of creation should, owing to special conditions, exclude the plurality of individuals). It follows that if God had so willed He might certainly have produced the reality of another human being similar in all respects to Adam; and this reality which He might have produced is what I call *possible reality*.

Leibnitz attempts to prove the impossibility of God choosing between two perfectly equal individuals, such as the human mind can conceive them,(2) on the ground that the Creator would have no sufficient reason for choosing one of them in preference to the other. But this allegation rests on the erroneous assumption that intelligence always acts, not only

(1) That the Will of God is the cause of contingent things, is shown by St. Thomas, S. p. I., q. xix., art. iv.

(2) The human mind is able to conceive the *possibility* of many individuals, not because the possibility of each of them is distinctly and expressly comprised in their specific idea itself, but because man, having come to know the existence of some real individual, refers this to its idea, and thus finds that such an individual does not exhaust, does not realize all that is therein comprised. In this way, and not otherwise, is he led to understand that in the idea there lies the possibility of an indefinite number of individuals perfectly similar to one another. I have already shown in many places that the possibility is not the idea itself, as many have erroneously attributed to me, but is a relation which the mind adds to the idea (See *Origin of Ideas*, nn. 543–546).

according to a *sufficient reason* but also according to a *prevalent* reason; so that a reason, in order to be sufficient, must of its own nature prevail over an opposite reason. Hence he does not admit in the human will the power to choose *between volitions*. (1) To this view, however, I am decidedly opposed, since it would destroy the bi-lateral liberty necessary for the existence of *merit* in the proper sense of the word. I demonstrate, on the contrary, that this power exists, and that its nature consists, 1st, in choosing between volitions, and 2ndly, in increasing, by the *practical force* of the will, the prevalence of one reason over another; so that the reason which prevails and determines the choice is not always prevalent *per se*, but may be rendered prevalent by our own free will; I agree, therefore, with Leibnitz so far as this, that intelligence always requires a reason for its action; but I maintain against him that, given the case in which each of two volitions has in its favour a reason of equal weight, the free will can, by increasing the force of the reason which is favourable to it, choose one rather than the other. This is a truth which may be discovered first of all by observing what takes place in man, and can

(1) In the *Reflections* of Leibnitz upon the controversy between Hobbes and Bramhall, a relation of which appears in a work published in London in 1656, entitled: *Questions touchant la liberté, la nécessité et le hazard éclaircies et débattues entre le Docteur Bramhall, évêque de Derry, et Thomas Hobbes de Malmesbury*, 4to, the German Philosopher writes as follows: "Men choose objects by their will, but they do not choose their actual volitions, these come from reasons and from dispositions." A similar thought is expressed by Leibnitz in many places. On the contrary, I have proved that truly *meritorious liberty* cannot consist in anything else than the *choice between the volitions themselves*, and that this is exactly what constitutes the difference between liberty and will, the liberty that is to say which we call *bi-lateral*. See *Anthropology* ("Antropologia"), nn. 636–643.

afterwards be corroborated by showing the absurdities which would follow from the opposite system. I will mention only three of these.

1st. In the system I impugn, true moral merit in man becomes an impossibility.

2nd. It is not impossible to conceive two reasons of equal weight for two different volitions. Thus, in the case indicated above, we may very well conceive that God, at the beginning, might have created, instead of Adam, another man perfectly similar to him. Now, in this case the activity of an intelligent being would, in the Leibnitzian system, be fettered in its action. We can very well understand that the intellective activity, of its own nature, always chooses the best so long as the best can be had. When, however, as in the supposition of two reasons equal in weight, there is no best, then that activity is no longer bound by the law of the prevalent reason, for there is none present. It may be replied, that in such case the activity would not be intellective. But it is merely a question of agreeing in the meaning of the words we use. If by intellective action is meant an action conditioned to a reason, surely the activity we speak of is intellective. But if we were not to designate as intellective that action which chooses at pleasure between different reasons, what absurdity can there follow from this? None whatever. For, it should be born in mind that it is not always possible to reduce every activity to the intelligence, and that there is, as I have shown, an activity peculiar to real being.

Moreover, we have also seen that every activity, properly speaking, belongs to real being, and that it is always this that acts, and that it makes use of the

divers reasons supplied by the understanding solely for its own direction. Hence, activity is not produced by speculative knowledge, but guided by it. Consequently when it finds no guidance in knowledge, it does not itself cease to exist; its reality continues, with power to do as it pleases, being left free by the understanding itself to act in any of the ways which are presented to it. For, the understanding does not limit it to one way more than to another; it simply shows the two sides with equal impartiality. Therefore, to the question, "Whether in the case we speak of, the activity is intellective or not," I reply that it is intellective in part, the principal part, because it acts for a reason; but it is not intellective in all respects, that is, in its accessories, because there is something in it—I mean in the direction of its movement, which is chosen at pleasure by its own free energy.

3rd. By denying to God the power of creating, instead of the intellective being which He does create, another perfectly similar to it, we should be setting bounds to the Divine Omnipotence. Hence Leibnitz himself did not venture to deny the metaphysical possibility of the thing. Baldinotti, taking advantage of this admission, found himself in a position to urge against him the very argument which we oppose to him, namely, of the choice between possible individuals perfectly similar to one another, as the human mind can conceive them. (1)

(1) "But if two perfectly similar individuals are in themselves possible, as Leibnitz admitted, because he was unable to see how the two could be in mutual conflict, is it not plain that God can choose one of them rather than the other as the term of His creative action?" (Baldinotti, *Metaphysica Generalis*, 73.) Nevertheless, the admission Leibnitz makes does not justify the conclusion that God could at one and the same time

622. I say "as the human mind can conceive them;" because God's intelligence and action differ very widely from ours. In the first place, God has no need of *choosing*. He wills all that He wills by one sole act, and the object of this one and perfect act is presented to Him by His Wisdom and His Will, essentially good, without being at all preceded by an act of choice. Hence, to God, the *possible individuals perfectly similar to one another*, which we have supposed, do not exist as distinct one from the other, for the very reason that individual beings acquire existence and distinctness from God's decree to create them, not before that decree. Accordingly, they cannot in any true sense be objects of choice. But the human mind, forming to itself distinct ideas and images of these beings, conceives and supposes a choice made between them, and imagines this choice as taking place in God. The fact, however, is that in God mere "possibles" are only found virtually indistinct, such being their true mode of existence. We should not, therefore, be going far from the truth if we said that in God there is "the possibility of possibles," as has been elsewhere explained, (1) and that there is, moreover, the relation of the creature with His inexhaustible Power.

It would, therefore, be vain for us to attempt to con-

bring into existence any two equal beings whatever without exception; because this, as I have pointed out, would clash with the law of the interaction of the beings forming the universe—in other words, with the unity of the universe. Hence the arguments both of Clarke and Baldinotti are, in this respect, defective.

(1) See *Restoration of Philosophy, etc.* ("Rinnovamento della Filosofia"), Bk. iii., c. 52–53.

ceive a true choice as made by God between the reality of Adam and other realities perfectly similar to it. For, the reality of Adam differs from other things as the distinct does from the indistinct, as the first creative act does from another creative act which might come after it and produce a being similar in all things to the first, even in its relations. Only in the erroneous system of Emanation would a Divine choice between individuals be admissible; because, as in that system all creatures are merely parts of God's own being, their substance or reality is supposed to pre-exist in God, Not so, however, in the Catholic System of Creation, which teaches that the reality of creatures does not exist anteriorly to the creative decree, and consequently cannot be an object of choice. Thus the third of the questions which we have proposed has its origin as well as its solution in the imperfection of the human understanding; but when considered in reference to God, it vanishes into nothing—indeed, it becomes an absurdity.

623. Let us now return to the second question, which is the one that corresponds to the subject of this chapter. It shall be my endeavour to prove that "it is not in accordance with the Law of Wisdom that there should exist a plurality of intellective beings perfectly similar to one another in their final state."

I confine the proposition to intellective beings, because these alone have the nature of end for the action of an intelligent and moral agent as such.

624. As regards *non-intellective beings*, which have merely the nature of means, it would be difficult to prove the same thesis; and it was because Leibnitz extended his principle of "Indiscernibles" to these

beings also, that he found himself unable to answer the objection opposed to him by Clarke: "If God were ever to require for some of His purposes to create two or more individuals perfectly similar to one another, why could He not create them?" (1) This objection, it will be observed, starts from the *nature of means* which created beings may have, and not, as ours does, from their nature of end.

625. Moreover, it is necessary to consider well what it is that is required in order that two or more individuals may be truly said to be equal in all things save their own individuality. For this to be true, they must be equal in every thing which goes to constitute them, or makes them to be what they are; consequently, in their substance and in all their accidents. In expounding the second question, we have, besides their substance and their accidents, mentioned also *their relations with other beings*. The reason was, that certain relations go to make up that by which beings are what they are, as in the case of intellective being, in which knowledge may be considered as a relation with other beings, a relation which goes to constitute or determine it. Not all beings, however, nor all relations are of this nature. Thus as regards bodies, the external relations of space and time, that is to say, the place and the period in which they exist, are no constitutive element either of their substance or of their accidents, nor do they in any way belong to the corporeal being as such. Hence, if one were to say that the material universe is formed of elements which are perfectly hard, of the same nature, of the same size, and of the same figure, like the ὁμοιομερεῖς of Anaxagoras

(1) *Cinquième réplique de M. Clarke.*

—a thing which at least involves no absurdity—it is certain that these elements, although located in different parts of space, and considered in different periods of time, would be entities equal to one another in all respects save in their respective realities. Whether, on the other hand, the different conation toward motion, or the different motion, causes any change in the corporeal elements, is a question by no means easy to answer; because it depends on knowing whether the conation toward motion, and motion itself, are things belonging to corporeal nature, or extraneous to it. My own belief is, that the *notion of matter* does not include either motion or the conation towards motion, because matter has the nature, not of a *principle* but of a *term:* it includes, however, the faculty of receiving and transmitting motion and its conation, whatever this faculty may be. (1)

626. According to this opinion, the material elements in question, to be all perfectly alike, would have to be all at rest, or else have the same conation towards motion, and the same velocity of motion impressed on the same side of the element; although the different direction of the motion would be a matter of indifference, for the reason that we have stated, namely,

(1). Francesco Orioli, Professor at the University of Corfu, in his periodical publication, entitled *Spighe e Paglie*, has proposed as a hypothesis, that when the motion of a body is counteracted by the impression of a contrary motion, there remains in that body a virtual motion, that is to say, a tendency to continue the antecedent motion. His words are: "In that case, every material substance would preserve in itself, at least virtually, all the tendencies to motion which have been impressed on it at any previous period, aud would preserve them in the order in which they were impressed" (No. vi., § 1, 1844). I notice this hypothesis as a novel thought, although I must confess that I do not yet see any proof of its truth, or even of its probability.

that the part of space in which a body happens to find itself makes no change whatever in that body.

I will not therefore affirm that there cannot be, or that there are not corporeal elements perfectly similar to one another, nor yet do I mean to affirm the contrary, this question being wholly irrelevant to our present purpose.

627. As regards *non-intellective animal beings*, these are, beyond all doubt, modified by the sensations which they receive from without, and by the actions which they themselves exercise on extraneous bodies. Consequently, these relations, for all animal beings that are perfectly similar, would also have to be perfectly similar; otherwise these beings would vary one from the other. Now, as I said before, this perfect similarity of relations seems to me altogether impossible, except only in the hypothesis, which however is inadmissible (621 note), of the existence of two or more worlds, equal to one another in all respects; or at least in the hypothesis of the perfect equality between the little worlds, if we may so speak, within which the actions and re-actions of those animal beings are confined, that is to say, between the groups of extraneous beings which come in contact with, or exercise an influence upon them. This would not involve an absolute impossibility if it were to last only for an instant; but if we speak of an enduring equality, it seems inconceivable, owing to the connexion between all the parts of the universe, and to their continual and reciprocal actions, and the changes to which they give rise. But this also is outside the scope of our argument, which regards only intellective beings, which have the nature of end.

628. Now, I maintain that there cannot be any two or more intellective beings perfectly similar in their final state; and this not on the ground put forward by Leibnitz, that a reason sufficient of its own nature, in other words, prevalent, is so necessary for rational action that, but for it the action would be impossible. His argument is faulty in two ways: 1st, he starts from an erroneous notion of meritorious liberty, by ignoring that freedom of the human will which has power to cause a change in the efficacy of the reasons that present themselves to the mind, and which, consequently, renders possible the choice between two reasons in themselves of equal weight; for the free-will itself destroys that equality; 2ndly, he does not perceive that two individuals perfectly similar to each other might exist, not for God to choose which of the two was to exist, but because He could, without preferring either, create them both; and this was one of the arguments urged by Clarke against the Leibnitzian position.

629. Neither shall I rest content with the reason given above, efficacious though it be, of the connexion established between the beings forming the universe, and of the reciprocal changes which continually occur amongst them. This connexion and these changes, as was said, exclude perfect equality, except perhaps on the supposition that it were to last only for an instant.

630. The reason on which I here think it important to take our stand, is that which has reference solely to the final equality of two or more intellective individuals, and springs from the innermost nature of intelligence and wisdom, which never aims at mere

individuals as its end, but always at individuals in so far as they realize in themselves a *species* of moral-eudemonological good.

631. Let us consider, then, that the form of the understanding consists in the idea of indeterminate being, and that the idea is invariably the foundation of a *species* (or class); for, even generic ideas may be reduced to specific ideas, from which they are abstractions. (1) Let us consider moreover, that the will, which is the principle of intellective action, always terminates with its action, in an object known and set before it by the intelligence. It follows, that the objects are willed by the will in the same way that they are known by the understanding. (2) The question, therefore, resolves itself into the inquiry: "How the real beings to which the inclination of the will is directed become known to us."

Now, the real beings perceived in feeling, become known by our referring them to the *idea*, in which we see their *essence*. (3) Consequently, to know a real being is nothing else than to perceive that a given essence (and it is a part of the universal essence, indeterminate being, being in general), is realized, has

(1) Here it is necessary to keep clearly in mind the doctrine regarding *genera* and *species*, which I have set forth in the *Origin of Ideas*, nn. 546–559.

(2) It must be carefully noted that here I speak of the *mode* in which the will acts, not of the *degree* of intensity, with which the objects are willed. This *mode* depends in part on the will itself; and it is in this that the efficacy peculiar to bi-lateral liberty consists.

(3) That is to say, we see *what* these beings severally are, by the way in which we feel them severally acting on us. This way *determines* for us what we see indeterminately in the first idea, ever present to our intelligence, and constituting its *light*.—*Tr.*

passed from potentiality to act. (1) The entity, therefore, which is found in a real individual, is no other than that which lies in its essence, cognizable by its *idea*. Now, this entity is what constitutes the good which a real being has in it; and the more entity the being has, the greater is its good, because *ens et bonum convertuntur*—"Being and good are convertible terms." (2)

And since the will has good for its object, so in proportion as the real being is good, in the same proportion it inclines the will to itself. Now, if we suppose the question to be about beings that differ from and are opposed to one another in their substance and their accidents, it is plain that one individual alone cannot itself receive all the entity to which its essence extends; because it does not, at one and the same time, admit of all the accidents of which that essence is susceptible. And as our question here is about a final and permanent state, it is equally plain that an individual cannot, in its final and permanent state, realize all the good which the mind contemplates in the essence. When, therefore, the will, which has that good for its object, has produced one individual, it remains still inclined to produce others in which to realize that portion of good, which could not be realized in the first individual, owing to its incapacity to receive it. But for the same reason, when the producing will has brought into existence as many individuals as it requires in order to the realization of all the modes and of all the accidents to which the essence extends,

(1) See *Origin of Ideas*, nn. 495–518.

(2) See *Principles of Moral Science* ("Principii della Scienza Morale"), c. ii.

then there is nothing left for it to realize; consequently its producing action stops. The good which it wanted to obtain has all been obtained. The goal has been reached. After all the individuals diversified in their modes and accidents had been produced, if the same kind of production were simply to be repeated, there would be no good, no being which was new to the intelligence and the will, no being which did not already exist. True, thus to receive existence would be a good thing for the individuals themselves who received it; but it would be as nothing to the intelligence and the will of the producer: it would be a superfluity to the realization of the idea of the universe. That Being, therefore, Who essentially acts by intelligence and will, I mean God, will never produce those individuals, not because He has not the power to produce them if He willed it, but because He does not will it; since that production would be directly opposed to the law which directs wisdom in regard to its *end*, and says: "Realize all the good which is shown in the intelligible essence," and also opposed to the law which directs wisdom in regard to its *mode* of action, and says: "Secure your end by the least means possible; therefore avoid all superfluities."

632. This demonstration is rendered still more complete by an observation which we find in St. Thomas. Creatures, he says, partake of the Divine Goodness, not by their *matter*, but by their *form*. The reason is, that the form is reduced to God, being found in the Divine Exemplar, and consequently in the Eternal Word; and God does not produce things save in so far as He can make them to partake of His goodness. Here are his words: "In substances the matter

exists for the form; SINCE IT IS BY THE FORM THAT THEY PARTAKE OF THE DIVINE GOODNESS, for the sake of which all things have been made." (1) From this principle, he infers the exclusion of all individual beings which are superfluous to the realization of the form;—"Hence it is plain, that particulars exist FOR THE SAKE OF THE WHOLE NATURE. And in proof of this we find that in those cases in which the universal nature can be preserved by means of one individual, there exists no plurality of individuals of the same species." (2)

633. Wherefore, two intellective beings wholly similar to each other in their final and permanent state, cannot be the object of an Infinite Wisdom.

The same thing may be proved by considering the Law of Morality, which coincides and which always has its seat in that of Intelligence, or certainly is directed by it. Let us see.

The principle of morality consists in "the practical recognition of the good which is found in a real being known." (3) If then the moral act has for its object the *good* found in a real being known, clearly the moral appreciation and affection does not stop at the *reality* of the individual, but is directed to the eternal *essence* which is contemplated in the idea of that individual. The mind measures the individual precisely by the idea in which it beholds its essence; and it appreciates the individual in proportion to the extent to which it finds that essence realized in it. That the reality which constitutes it an individual

(1) *Contra Gent.*, Bk. iii., c. lxxv., 6. (2) *Ibid.*

(3) See *Comparative and Critical History of the Systems regarding the Principle of Morality* ("Storia Comparativa, etc."), Ch. I.

is this or that other is entirely a matter of indifference to morality. Hence if there could be two individuals perfectly similar to each other, the moral appreciation and affection of which they would form the object would not be morally different, but identical, although their reality and individuality would be different. I say *identical*, to signify that the moral affection which had those two intellective individuals for its object—if we abstract from deficiency on the part of him who entertains the affection—would be the same, not merely as to quality, but also as to degree. For, if we consider affection in man, it seems as if it ought to be greater in regard to two individuals than in regard to one only; because human affection is mostly weak and deficient. But if affection is considered in God, in Whom the notion of love is realized in its fullest completion, it will be readily seen, that one being suffices to exhaust all the affection which could possibly be demanded by the essence which that being expresses and realizes: and this for the reason just stated, that rational and moral affection has for its object the being in so far as its essence is realized. Hence, in a perfect lover like God, and with due proportion, in the heavenly comprehensors, the love towards a being whose whole essence is seen to be subsistent, absorbs every possible affection for other beings which might be realized, similar to the first. To love one of them is to love them all, because it is to love their species and nature which is the object of intelligence and of intellective love. Neither the intensity nor the morality of this love can increase by their being multiplied, nor can the lover receive, by that multiplication, any occasion whatever of rendering himself more virtuous

or more happy by loving them. Only in man while as yet a wayfarer upon earth can this love—because of its deficiency, of its being only potential or habitual—be made to increase through a repetition of acts, without however advancing to a nobler species, unless the species itself of the object change from a lower to a more exalted one. Nevertheless, these acts may be repeated in regard to one and the same being, without any need of there being others like it.

It is not, then, *individuality* and *reality* as such that constitutes, properly speaking, the object of morality, but it is the *essence* in so far as realized. Thus if God had created, instead of Adam, another man similar in all respects to Adam, and different only in the reality —a thing which it is possible to conceive—the moral act to which this man would have given occasion in other intellective beings who had come to know him would have been the very same neither more nor less; morality would neither have gained nor lost by it. No doubt, an Infinite Goodness will desire to produce all the good possible; but to desire to produce all the good possible, is nothing else than to desire to realize the essences of beings to the fullest extent. When, therefore, Creative Goodness has attained this its end, it will stop; for it will no longer have a reason for creating new individuals. They would add nothing to the perfect realization of their essences, nor afford an occasion for a fresh act of moral goodness. For, by loving the individuals in which the whole essence of the species to which they belong is completely realized, the whole of that essence is fully appreciated and loved in them, and thus all the moral good possible in regard to them is exhausted. Therefore, a supreme

Creative Goodness will never produce two individuals which in their *final and permanent state* are perfectly alike; for this would be a superfluity, seeing that for gaining the moral end sought, one individual suffices.

634. But if the principle of the *realization of the several species* implies the Law of Excluded Equality, it affords, on the other hand, a new proof in favour of that of Variety.

For, we must consider that the *abstract species* is an imperfect species, wholly unfit to be an object of a perfect intelligence, such as God's is, the directive rules or types of Whose action consist in the *full species*, distinguished from one another by His creative act. Now, the full species for each being are as many as are the modifications and varieties, whether in a good or in a bad sense, which can occur in that being, and which reciprocally exclude one another.

It is true that in the archetype, or perfectly complete species, all the other species seem to be virtually contained. But in the first place it is not certain that each being has but one archetype, and perhaps in regard to some beings the contrary could be shown; indeed, I hold this to be altogether probable in the case of beings formed of several elements. In the second place, assuming that there is but one archetype, we cannot on this account affirm that it contains in itself every possible excellence of a being; because certain excellences are excluded by the limitation of the being itself. For example, if we suppose the archetype of colours to be white, it does not follow that white has in itself the aptitude for producing that agreeable sensation which is produced by green, or red, etc. Or

we may take a particular colour, for instance green, presented in its greatest intensity. Although in this state it might in a certain manner be said to contain virtually all the more languid sensations which it is otherwise calculated to excite, nevertheless one could hardly maintain that it actually causes, in the soul and the eyes of the beholder, all those delightful sensations which are wont to be excited by its graduated tints, each of which excludes the others, and gives a delight peculiar to itself. In the third place, even if the archetype could contain all the excellences of which a being is susceptible, those excellences would be so intermingled in it and confused, as to result, on this very account, in a different thing from what they are when seen separately and distinct the one from the other; much in the same way as two colours blended together produce a third, which is neither of the two. In the fourth place, even if in the archetype there could be contained all possible excellences quite distinct from one another, as in the case of the archetypes of composite beings, nevertheless the one would necessarily limit the others; because there would have to be maintained amongst them an order followed by harmony; so that none of them could be carried to the highest degree of intensity without doing injury to the harmony of the whole. Thus, in a first-rate painting it would be impossible for each of all the colours employed to predominate and each to be of the highest intensity; since this would destroy the general effect of the picture. In the fifth place, the archetype does not show the deficiencies of the being, I mean the absence of excellences, and the inordinations, that is to say the evils; all of which are found in the other full but

incomplete species. And yet these deficiencies and evils also are necessary in order that the essence may be fully realized and manifested to created intelligences; inasmuch as it is by them that the limitation and the deficiency of the essence is made known.

635. For all these reasons it was requisite that Eternal Wisdom, tending as it does to realize essences in a complete manner, should cause them to exist in all the varieties possible. To these we may also add two other reasons :—

1st. Were it not for these varieties, an immense amount of good would be lost to the universe. For, there is no variety, no endowment of a being, no combination of divers endowments, no defect, no disorder, which, being wisely arranged in connexion with other beings and with other varieties, is not apt to produce or give occasion to manifold good, particular as well as universal, that is, resulting from the harmony of things. Thus bodily pain in persons who are morally well disposed, gives occasion to the virtue of fortitude; and when viewed in reference to the vicissitudes of human life, produces most pleasing reminiscences, according to that of the Poet:

Vos et Cyclopea saxa
Experti, revocate animos, mœstumque timorem
Mittite : forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit. (1)

Misfortune leads to indissoluble friendships, excites feelings of commiseration, opens the way to innumerable works of charity; so that if there were no misfortunes, the love which binds men together would be

(1) Virgil, Æneid i. 201–203.

incomparably less than it is, and the exercise of human activity would well nigh cease.

636. 2ndly Without occasions of observing all these varieties, man could not acquire a full *knowledge*, or form a true estimate of beings in their essences. For, one essence alone, either abstract or even archetypal, does not reveal all the excellences and varieties of which a being is susceptible; neither is the limited mind of the creature able to contemplate many entities together with the same intensity of thought with which it contemplates them separately one at a time. Hence the division of accidental entities became necessary in order that man might come to know created things in the best way, and through them rise to the knowledge of God. This being a point of very great importance, we shall return to it further on.

637. In the meantime from this doctrine which shows the aim of God's action to be the realization of the eternal essences of things, many and most important consequences follow, of which I will here mention a few.

The first is, that this doctrine enables us to settle the question long agitated by Theologians and Philosophers: "How God can love creatures, and can will to produce them by an act of goodness, seeing that He has no need of them, and that they cannot add any good to Him, and seeing also that it is impossible for His love to have a worthy object other than Himself."

Archbishop King, in his celebrated work, "On the Origin of Evil," maintains that God determined to create the universe with a liberty of such absolute in-

difference, that to create and not to create was all the same to Him; and at the same time he makes the admission that creatures cannot be the objects of a Divine appetition, because they are not good of their own nature, but only by the will of God, Who renders them good by willing them, so that, abstracting from their relation with the Divine Will, there could not be found in them either good or evil. This view was, rightly enough, combated by Leibnitz. "It is difficult," says he, "to conceive how authors of merit could adopt so strange an opinion. It seems that the author tries to justify it by alleging the fact that all creatures have the whole of their being from God, and cannot act on Him, nor determine Him. This, however, is manifestly to alter the question. When we say that an intelligence is moved by the goodness of its object, we do not thereby mean that this object is necessarily a being existing outside that intelligence. It is enough for us that such an object is conceivable; for it is the representation of it that acts upon the intelligence, or rather it is the intelligence that acts upon itself in so far as it is affected and disposed by this representation. As regards God, it is manifest that His Intelligence contains the *ideas* of all things that are possible, and that it is on this account that all things are in Him in an eminent manner. God, therefore, determines Himself of His own accord. His Will is active in virtue of His Goodness, but it is directed to a determinate object by the action of His Intelligence, full of wisdom. Now, if *ideas* are independent of the will, the perfection and imperfection which is represented by them will be so likewise. And in truth, is it

owing to the Will of God, and not rather to the nature of numbers, that certain numbers, for example, are capable of admitting of exact divisions to a larger extent than others? That some are more suited than others for the purpose of forming squares or polygons, or other regular figures? That the number six has the prerogative of being the least among those that are called perfect? That in a plane six circles of equal size can be made to touch a seventh? That among all solids of equal volume the sphere is that which has the least superficies? That certain lines are incommensurable and, as a consequence, but little fitted for harmony? Is it not obvious that all these advantages or disadvantages are implied in the mere notion of the thing, and that the contrary involves contradiction? Or are we perhaps also expected to say that the pains and inconveniences suffered by sensitive creatures, and especially the happiness and unhappiness of intelligent beings are matters of indifference to God? And what about His justice? Is this also an arbitrary thing? Would He have acted wisely and justly, if He had resolved to send the innocent to perdition? There was, therefore, in God a reason anterior to the resolve, and, as I have so often said, it was not by chance, not without a purpose, nor yet from necessity, that God created this world. His *inclination* led Him to this, and His inclination always leads Him to the best. To create, therefore, or not to create is not a matter of absolute indifference to God; and yet creation is a free act. Neither is it a matter of indifference to Him whether He creates one world or another, whether He creates a perpetual chaos or a system full of order. The qualities of the

objects, which are comprised in their ideas, were therefore the reason of His choice." (1)

In this excellent extract there is much that is true and admirably well said. The solemn distinction between *real being* and *ideal being*, which is the foundation of all Philosophy, throws no small light upon the argument.—The *principle of action* is always in real being: the idea merely directs the action. But between divine and human action there is this difference, that in God, Who is the Absolute Reality, the principle of action exists in so perfect a manner that He cannot receive any excitation to act from real beings outside Himself; whereas in man, a limited reality, the principle of action exists imperfectly, so that he can receive excitation and motion from realities other than himself. Hence it happens that man is sometimes moved to act by the action of created realities that are extraneous to him. Reality, as we have seen, is the principle of individuality. When, therefore, man, as a real individual, receives the action of other real individuals, that action sometimes produces in him a delectation, and this gives rise to an inclination to act, or to a pleasant instinct tending to unite individual with individual, reality with reality. There is nothing of this in God. He has no inclination towards any realities, as realities, other than His own. He takes complacency only in Himself.

The delectation and the instinct which is aroused within one contingent reality towards another contingent reality, is not, in itself, either an intellectual or a moral thing. It is indeed true that man has an

(1) Adnotationes in librum *De Origine Mali*, haud ita pridem in Anglia evulgatum, n. 21.

intellectual perception of it, and that he can therefore propose to himself as the end of his action that very delectation and the pleasant concurrence of the instinct which springs therefrom; and this explains how it is that the intellective creature does not always act from love of the good which it sees in the *idea*, but sometimes from the individual impulse of the reality conceived by the understanding, and allowed free scope, or even seconded, by the will. But although an action done in this way becomes intellectual, yet it does not acquire any morality; because morality never considers the individual as individual and as reality, but always as a realization of an eternal essence. All moral appreciation and love terminates here. God, therefore, Whose action is always intellectual and always moral, could never have for the end of creation the individual, as individual, the mere reality of the individual, which does not exist until He creates it. He must always aim at the *eternal essence of the individual*, which is contained in the Divine idea, and whence springs the inclination of His Goodness, to produce the created reality as an actuation and a realization of that eternal essence which lies in the abyss of His Being. Hence St. Thomas with his usual acuteness and precision of language says: "To the First Agent, Who is solely agent" (and not patient), "it belongs not to act for the purpose of gaining some end" (as is the case with passive agents, which tend to acquire); "His end is purely to COMMUNICATE His perfection, which is His goodness." (1) This communication, so delightful to Him, consists exactly in causing the essences of contingent things to pass from

(1) S. p. I., q. xliv., art. iv.

the state of mere potentiality into that of actual subsistence, or realization; such being the meaning of the word "to create."

638. Hence also we can readily see the reason why the Fathers and Doctors of the Church say that God's knowledge (we should say *practical knowledge*) is the cause of things. Let us hear St. Thomas: "The intelligible form" (the essence of the thing contemplated by the intelligent being) "does not indicate a principle of action merely by the fact of its being seen by the mind. That it may indicate this, there must be conjoined with it an inclination towards the effect, which inclination springs from the will. For, as the intelligible form is in itself equally indifferent in respect of opposites (because the science of opposites is one and the same science), so it would not produce a determinate effect, unless it were determined to one by the appetite, as the Philosopher says in the Metaphysics (ix. text 10). Now, it is manifest that God causes things by His understanding, because His understanding is His being. We must needs say, therefore, that His knowledge is the cause of things in so far as it has will conjoined with it." (1) And the will is exactly what renders knowledge practical. The *action* therefore responds to the *cause;* and as in God this cause consists in operative knowledge, so God creates so much as, and no more than, suffices to realize the essences of the things which He wills to create; and it is by these essences that His knowledge is constituted. The clear outcome of this is, that God loves contingent things for His own sake, loving them by reason of those eternal essences which lie in an

(1) S. p. I., q. xiv. art. viii.

indistinct state in His own nature, and which He distinguishes by producing them in time by the creative act.

639. The second consequence is, that although in contingent beings there are developed the evils of which they are susceptible, God does not love them any the less on that account. For, in the eternal essences of creatures these evils are found already marked. And as the love which God bears His creatures refers to their essences seen clearly in the Divine ideal, and not to their realities, as such, it follows that the evils to which God permits creatures to be subject in their realities, and which, on the other hand, are necessary for the realization of the Divine ideal, does not diminish the love which God bears to His creation taken in its totality; because as we have said, the measure of this love is gauged by the measure of entity, and therefore of good, which is found in the eternal exemplar. Consequently, as the object of God's love is not the *individual good* as individual or real, that is to say, considered apart from the relation it has with its eternal type; so, on the contrary, the object of God's hatred is the *individual evil* only, as individual, that is to say, considered apart from its relation with the eternal type in which it is included, and wherein it limits good without destroying it, nay, even concurring to its completion. Hence again, even as God produces no being that is not necessary for the realization of its type, so He permits no evil that is not necessary for the realization of the accident of the evil implicitly contained in the archetype. For, although an evil in excess of this, if God were to permit it, would injure no one but the individuals themselves whom it

befalls, nevertheless it would hinder the sum total of the universal good from reaching the *maximum* possible, and likewise it would be a superfluity, and so it would be repugnant with Divine Wisdom for two reasons. But as the lovableness of creatures in regard to God is wholly centred in the Divine ideal which they express; so what limits this lovableness is not the real evil but the possible evil, necessary by the nature of things. And thus we can see, that if the possibility of evil, which is a necessity, does not detract from God's Sanctity, neither can its actual existence, its realization, detract in any way from that Sanctity.

640. The third consequence is, that in heaven, in the multitude of the saints, there will not be found any two who are equal to each other in all respects. Each will be unique, supreme in his own form; and this will increase his glory. Hence there will be good reason for saying of each of the Blessed that which the Church sings of every Pontiff: "There hath not been found one like him, to keep the law of the Most High," and the words of the ecstatic St. John will receive their fulfilment: "To him that overcometh, I will give a hidden manna and will give him a white counter, and in the counter a new name written, which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it." (1) What is this name which no man can read but he who has received it, save that character or type of sanctity peculiar to each, of which no one else will have experience, and which will impart to him who bears it impressed upon himself a delight incommunicable, symbolized in the hidden manna? Indeed, if something similar to this takes place in the Spouse of Christ even here on earth, how much more must that which the Psalmist says of her

(1) Apoc. ii. 17.

when he describes her as "clothed round with varieties" (1) take place in the final state when she shall have entered fully into her eternal nuptials! I have therefore no hesitation in believing that as many as are the types of sanctity, so many are the thrones of the heavenly mansion, and that upon each one of them one individual alone will take his seat. This will help us to understand the simile used by the Apostle: "Know ye not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain." (2) Many run in this life that they may secure a throne in heaven, but only one obtains it; although he who fails to obtain one may perhaps succeed in obtaining another, on which, however, he alone will sit.

641. Lastly, the fourth consequence is, that by means of the doctrine here set forth we can see why it is that, strictly speaking, the knowledge of singulars as singulars, is no intellectual acquisition, or perfection, and why it is said that all knowledge consists of universals. Hence this kind of knowledge adds nothing to the speculative understanding, and only helps the practical understanding to act; (3) which nevertheless does not act wisely and morally unless it turns to some speculative notion, giving the appreciation and affection which is due to the *essence of beings* in proportion as it partakes more or less of the *universal* and infinite *essence*.

(1) Ps. xliv. 15. (2) 1. Cor. ix. 24.

(3) St. Thomas says: "The knowledge of singulars does not belong to the perfection of the intellective soul according to speculative knowledge. It belongs, however, to its perfection according to practical knowledge, which is not perfected without the knowledge of singulars, in which action is to be found as the Philosopher says in the 6th Book of the Ethics, ch. 7" (S. p. iii. q. xi., art. 1).

CHAPTER XXIV.

EIGHTH CONSEQUENCE—LAW OF UNITY IN GOD'S ACTION.

Et cum sit una, omnia potest; et in se permanens omnia innovat.
Wisd. vii. 27.

642. It is not enough to consider that the end of God's action in creating the reality of things is centred in the ideal. It is furthermore necessary to show that in God this very ideality is not divided into parts, but most simple and united. Hence the unity and complexity of His action.

643. This unity, not limited to a part, but embracing the totality of things, follows as a fresh consequence of the Law of the Least Means. For, as this law requires that the will should tend to the greatest good possible, so it requires that all particular goods and all particular evils should be computed together, in order to find what will, in the long run, turn out to be that *maximum* of good, which is the best and indeed the only object of the action of a perfect will.

But that it may be seen how consistent are the doctrines here propounded, I shall in this chapter endeavour not so much to prove that the unity of God's action is due to the Law of the Least Means as to prove that it proceeds from God's very Essence.

644. God is the *Absolute Being*. In Him there are three forms, which, in our human and inadequate

language, I call Reality, Ideality, and Morality, existing together in a most simple unity. God's mode of action must necessarily be, like Himself, One and Triune. The operative action belongs to reality, but it is always directed by ideality. Hence in the preceding chapter we saw that God is not moved to create contingent natures because He loves their reality as an end, but because in their reality He loves the *ideal essence* which is present to His Intellect. Accordingly the love of the Creator terminates ultimately in Himself; and this is in fact what Holy Scripture says: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, the wicked also for the evil day." (1) For even the wicked have their eternal type in the ideal of God's Intelligence, and contribute to its realization. (2)

645. That God finds the end of His actions in the essences which exist within Him is a thing which need not be proved, for it is the law of all intellective as well as of all moral action. Morality, as we have seen, is not a tendency which can find rest in the finite and the temporal; it must attain to the infinite and the everlasting, and there alone has birth and life, and that is why we have laid it down that a non-intellective being cannot be an object of moral virtue, because where there is no intelligence the divine element is wanting.

Now, God acts, not merely as intelligent, but also as infinitely and essentially such; hence another law of His action, that of the *unity* of which we speak.

646. Even if we consider only His Power, we can

(1) Prov. xvi. 4.

(2) It must be borne in mind that the idea of evil is not an evil thing; nor is the type of a wicked man stained with any wickedness.

clearly see that He must do all that He does by one sole and most simple act, and from eternity; because such is, by the very nature of things, the mode of action requisite in a power infinitely great. But the same truth may also be arrived at by considering what must be the action of an infinite intelligence. That intelligence must necessarily and from eternity know all things by one sole and most simple act. Such, therefore, will be the act whereby God's Intelligence eternally grasps the exemplar of all that He wills to do; and it is the identical act whereby He does it.

647. We have seen that God could not have drawn from the universe the greatest good, save on condition of its being all connected and bound together in its every part. Hence from the Law of the Least Means we inferred the unity of the universe.

We must add that in order that the universe might yield the *maximum* of good, and in this sense prove a work worthy of its author, it was first of all necessary that it should be represented in its essence by the most simple act of God's Intelligence, and by the same act brought into existence.

For, that act of God's Intelligence is practical, that is to say, operative; it is the mighty act which creates the world. It must therefore be aroused by the will. Now, we must not suppose that God, in contemplating the *idea* wherein He beholds all beings, had any difficulty in discerning the perfect world which He willed to create; or that—as happens in man, who when he begins to harbour a volition does not yet know what he wills except in a general and imperfect way—He passed from willing potentially to the actual

determining of the world He wished to create, as if there had been in His Will a moment spent in deliberating as to what that world must be in order to be perfect. Nothing of all this. Hence we must also exclude from the act of God's Will all selection between possible worlds. For, a selection would imply a certain comparison between these worlds; and to attribute comparison to God would be to attribute to Him the imperfection of human action. We must needs say, therefore, that God's Will, because most excellent and perfect, without any process of investigation or of choosing, and by a most perfect and Divine instinct, determined at once and directly on the perfect world which it willed to realize. In this way was the Divine Intelligence instinctively, and without any other determination than the natural perfection of the Divine volitive power, moved to that most simple operative act whereby the perfect world was drawn out of nothingness. And this explains how that world which was not, by itself, distinct in what Theologians, speaking of God, call the knowledge of *simple intelligence*, became distinct in what they call the *knowledge of vision*, or, as St. Thomas terms it, of *approbation*, (1) and this, I may observe, corresponds with what I am wont to designate as *practical knowing*.

From eternity, then, the Divine Will was determined by its own perfectly free Goodness and Excellence to create the world perfect. It had neither to compose it, nor to seek for it, nor to select it from among the countless possible worlds. (2)

(1) S. p. I., q. xxxii., art. i. ad. 3 m.

(2) How in God the "possibles" are not, by themselves, really distinct, but receive distinctness from His creating Will was explained in the *Resto-*

648. Now, from this simplicity and unity of the intellective act, whereby God willed and created the world, there flow several corollaries useful for our purpose.

1st. That act had not for its object one part of the world separately from the rest, one being apart from other beings, but the *whole*, the complex of things, linked together most wisely in unity. Therefore, the *good* which forms the final aim of the Divine Will is a good embodying in itself the total effect of the action of all things; it is the sum total of good as resulting from all the beings which compose the world, indivisibly united in the Divine Intelligence.

649. 2ndly. The several parts forming the world, and the several beings, are not willed by *Creating Will* save in the *whole* as parts of the whole, as coalescing to form the whole, in other words, as necessary to the production of that *total of the one final good* at which the creating act aims, and which is God's reason for that act.

650. 3rdly. That which is not the final moral-eudemonological good, nor part of it, is not willed except on account of its being a *means* towards the final good taken in its totality. In this way God wills, permissively, physical and moral evils; and in the same way He wills contingent real beings and contingent intellective beings (if we view them as apart from morality) and again He wills even morality considered as existing only potentially and not yet in act; although in potential morality itself there is a primal act which has the nature of end, and hence enters into the formation of the sum of final good.

ration of Philosophy, etc. ("Rinnovamento della Filosofia,") Bk. iii. ch. 52, 53.

651. 4thly. As a consequence of this, God is determined by His Sovereign Wisdom and His Sovereign Goodness to permit particular evils, physical as well as moral, whenever, owing to the limitations of created things, He sees that those evils cannot be excluded from the universe without causing a diminution in the final sum total of good which forms essentially the object of this sovereignly perfect Will, and to which He would Himself be putting an obstacle were He to sacrifice the whole to the part, and the end to the means. Therefore, in a difficulty of this kind, the proper question to ask is not, "Why has God willed this evil," but "Why has He willed that whole, that world, in which such evil is comprised," since no part separated from the whole could be the object of the creating and governing will. Now, to this second question the right answer is: "Because such a world was worthy of the Supreme Goodness inasmuch as it produced the greatest amount of good by the least available means, and hence was the only one possible."

652. 5thly. Therefore, whenever man speaks of Divine intellections and volitions regarding only a part of the universe, and not the whole, supposing that in God there is a plurality of intellective and volitive acts, he merely attributes to God the imperfection of the human understanding and will. Man indeed does not will all that he wills by a single act, because he does not understand all that he understands by a single act, but part by part, and hence by a multiplicity of acts. And this human way of conceiving of the Divine action may, it is true, be of service if it be afterwards corrected by reflection, I mean if one distinctly takes notice that among the supposed manifold Divine

intellections and volitions there is no real, and even no mental separation, and that it is only we who separate them, owing to the limitation of our intelligence, obliged in such things to follow the analytical process.

Leibnitz, speaking in accordance with this human way of conceiving, says of God's Intelligence: "The Wisdom of God, not content with embracing all possibles, penetrates into and compares them, weighing one against another in order to estimate their degrees of perfection or imperfection, to see that which is strong and that which is feeble, the good and the evil. It goes beyond finite combinations, making an infinity of infinite ones, that is to say, an infinite number of possible series of worlds, each containing an infinity of creatures. In this way Divine Wisdom distributes all the possibles which it had first seen apart in so many universal systems, which it likewise confronts. The result of all these confrontings and of all these reflections is at last the selection of the best among all possible systems, which the same wisdom makes in order fully to satisfy goodness. Such is the plan of the actual universe." (1)

Now, all these manifold acts of comparison, of reflection and of selection have no place in the mind of God. They are merely supposed by the philosopher as, so to speak, so many postulates. Nor are the inaccuracies contained in the supposition sufficiently rectified by the declaration which Leibnitz immediately subjoins, saying: "And all these acts of God's Intelligence, although there is among them an order and a priority of nature, take place at once, without any

(1) *Théodicée*, 225.

priority of time." (1) For, according to this view, the acts in question, although done altogether, still retain their plurality; whereas the truth is, that God's intellection, which when conceived by us and expressed in human language, seems to contain a vast number of acts altogether distinct from one another, is in itself perfectly one and simple. If, however, instead of contenting ourselves with thus separating the act of God's Intelligence into parts, solely to the end that we may in some manner understand its grandeur, we were to insist on taking that division as the basis of our arguments, and on adopting their conclusions, as if the division existed in God Himself, we should at once quit the right track, and fall into error.

To confine our discourse, then, to the practical and creative intelligence, this, as we have said, excludes also all antecedent comparison and selection; because the will, being essential goodness, by a wonderful Divine instinct moves that intelligence to the perfect and best. And this perfect and best it has no need to search for; since it has of itself from eternity an inclination and love for it, that very love from which the act of creation most freely proceeds.

653. So likewise does Leibnitz speak of the Divine Will in human fashion when he says that God, in virtue of His Sovereign Goodness, has a serious inclination to produce or to will, and to cause to be produced, every good and every praiseworthy action; as also to hinder or set Himself against every evil and every reprehensible action, and prevent their existence. But owing to this same Goodness of His, conjoined with His Infinite Wisdom, and in consequence of the very

(1) *Théodicée*, 225.

concourse of all the antecedent and particular inclinations towards each good, and towards the prevention of each evil, He resolves on producing the best possible system of things: and this constitutes His final and decretory Will.(1)

The truth, however, is that God's Will has but one act which, in respect to creatures, has for its object the perfect universe, a thing possible for the very reason that it was the natural object of the creative act. For, nothing exists save God and the universe, nor can God's Will really have any other inclination than that which has for its object God Himself and that universe, of which there is in God the ideal essence, determined by the same Will which eternally creates it.

654. Nevertheless, man, by reason of the limitation of his mind, is almost necessitated to place several hypothetical wills in God, that He may explain God's actions to himself. For example, when he considers that God is Essential Goodness, he at once concludes that God loves every particular good and hates every particular evil, and will therefore always feel pleasure in the former and effectually oppose the latter. And that God loves every particular good and hates every particular evil, is strictly true; but that He therefore wills that there should actually exist every particular good which it is possible for us to conceive, to the exclusion of every evil, this is not true except hypothetically, that is to say, except on the supposition that that particular good and that particular evil, thus separated, could be an object of the Divine Will,

(1) *Réflections sur l'Ouvrage que M. Hobbes a publié en Anglais* "De la Liberté, de la Necessité et du Hazard," n. 11.

essentially synthetic. These partial, and—so far as the creative decree is concerned—hypothetical volitions, are reduced to what Theologians call the *antecedent will*, to which there corresponds in God something true, namely, the inclination or love towards all good, and the hatred of all evil. But since, as a matter of fact, many partial goods, owing to their limitations, exclude one another, and are moreover limited by many evils, necessary conditions of their existence; and since, on the other hand, that would not be a perfect will which preferred the production of a lesser to that of a greater good, or which, to avoid a small evil, willed and decreed the loss of an abundance of good far out-weighing that evil; therefore the Divine Will loves with a prevalent love that sum of good which is greatest relatively to the means employed in obtaining it. This is what Theologians call the *consequent will*, and it is the only will that directs God's action; because it takes in the whole of His work, which constitutes the sole object of the one volition whereby He, from eternity, does all that He does. (1)

(1) God loves and wills the essence of good. From this truth the human mind rightly infers, that God loves all the particular goods conceivable by it, some of which He produces and others not. The Divine Will thus conceived of in regard to these last-named goods is called in the Schools *antecedent will*. The *antecedent will*, therefore, is simply the Divine Will, loving and willing the essence of good, and hence loving and willing all those things wherein man conceives in some degree the essence of good. When we say that in God there is but one act of volition, we mean a complete and distinct act. As for the rest, the antecedent will, to use the words of Leibnitz, "is altogether earnest and simple, and must not be confounded with the *velleity* of one who would if he could, and who would fain be able; a thing which can have no place in God. Neither must it be confounded with the *conditional* will, of which there is no question

655. The above doctrine may be of service for the better clearing up of our ideas in the matter of the efficacy of prayer. For, it is certain that if a man prays for the increase of the complex and final good of the universe, he cannot fail to be heard; because that good is the very thing which God wills, and which He obtains, precisely by hearing our prayers, in that full and overflowing measure which He saw fit and decreed from eternity. So, likewise, if a man asks aright and perseveringly for his own eternal salvation, he cannot but obtain it, although what he asks for is only a particular good. The reason is, that, considering the Infinite Goodness of God, it is necessary for the final complex good that prayer duly made should be answered, although not always in the same way. But this special request can be answered only in one way, namely, by granting the salvation of him who makes it. For, what would it profit that man if he were to obtain the salvation of the whole world, and at the same time his own soul were lost? His prayer

here. It is evident that the antecedent volitions are not altogether vain, but have an efficacy of their own, although the effect obtained from them is never full and entire, but restricted by the concourse of other antecedent volitions. As regards the decretory volition, which results from the *inclinatory* ones, this always attains its full effect." (Leibnitz. *La cause de Dieu plaidée par sa justice, conciliée avec ses autres perfections et toutes ses actions.*)

Thus the antecedent will, as conceived of by the Schools, is true, earnest, and simple, because it terminates in the essence of good; but the *decree* is wanting in it, because the essence of good cannot be realized where man supposes that it can. It must be regarded as a true love, and also as an effectual love, because it has an influence in producing the consequent will. I say that it must be regarded in this light, because otherwise we should have to give up the conceiving of it in a human way as a will at all. If we once begin to speak of God after a human fashion, we must continue to use the same kind of discourse, and if we do not, error will certainly follow.

would certainly not be heard. On the contrary, if one asks for the salvation of another person, his request may be complied with in several ways. The person whom he recommends may be saved, or else he himself may be vouchsafed a greater grace which is implicitly contained in his request, for example, his own salvation, and that of many other persons, and finally such goods and events as will have the effect of augmenting the final sum of the good to which the universe is ordained, and on which all the desires and prayers of men of good will should be bent. For, undoubtedly, he would not pray well who loved the salvation of an individual to such a degree as to prefer it to another grace which would lead to a far greater augmentation of the final sum of good. For, as this latter result is the object of the Divine Will, he who excluded it would not conform himself to that will. And much more would this be the case if one were to ask for a particular good which had purely the nature of a means, for example, the deliverance from bodily pain. To pray properly for things of this kind it is necessary to add the condition: "If the granting of them be for the greater glory of God, in other words, if it contribute to increase the final sum of good which God intends to draw from His creation." Prayer offered in this way is always heard, if not in the precise way desired, in a better.

656. From this we may get some insight into the Divine Wisdom by which Christ was moved when, being in an agony in the Garden at the lively representation of His impending Passion, He prayed to the Eternal Father thus: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I

will, but as Thou wilt." And again: "My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done." (1) How could He say "if it be possible," or "if this chalice *may not* pass away but I must drink it?" Were not all things possible to His Father? Undoubtedly they were, if His Power be considered apart from His Wisdom and His Goodness. As, however, God never acts by Power alone, but directs the works of Power by the rule of Wisdom and of Goodness, so the granting of that grace might very well not be possible; and in fact, as the event showed, it was not. Given that there was no other way of drawing the *maximum* of good from creation than that of the Passion of Christ, then the Passion could not be dispensed with, because it could not be that God should in His action ignore the law of Essential Wisdom and Goodness. Unquestionably, the Father made account in His infinite computation of the desire, the human will, the prayer of His Incarnate Son, and of all His sufferings. Yet He must have found that, even setting all this against the good which would ensue from the Divine Passion, there remained withal such an overwhelming balance of good as abundantly to justify those ineffable sufferings, that appalling death of the Man-God, that refusal to hear the prayer of the Just One, that extreme mortification and denial of His human will—to justify them; I say, as a means employed for a most exalted end. And if Christ, praying according to His Humanity, expressed a doubt as to whether it was or was not possible for that chalice to pass away so that He might not have to drink it; let no one suppose that He, as

(1) Matth. xxvi. 39, 42.

God, did not know the impossibility of that prayer being granted. But He designed thereby to teach us that the computation of the final good of the universe must be left entirely to the Father, because being made within the Divine Intellect, it infinitely exceeds all human thought. For, in that intellect a measure is found whereby to judge between two "infinites," namely, between, the sufferings of the "Word made Flesh," on the one hand, and on the other, the overwhelming eternal weight of glory which redounds from those sufferings to the Humanity of Christ and to His faithful followers. Hence, even from Christ Himself, as man, although most perfect, the reasoned solution of the great problem was hidden. Therefore He also submits the human will, which can have no other determinate object than the things which fall within the circuit of human knowledge, to the Divine Will, which has for its determinate object the *maximum* of good embraced by God's Knowledge. By this He teaches us to subordinate the things willed by us to those which God wills, for the very reason that of the latter we are ignorant. This subordination, made with implicit faith and a total abandonment of ourselves to God, will infallibly secure for us in the end the possession of the complete good, which is known to Him alone, and which it is impossible for us with our limited minds to know, although we can very well understand that what God wills is a far greater good than any which a mere human being can ever set before Himself. Thus it is by the Divine Will, all light, essentially perfect, that the *operative Divine Intelligence* is determined, nor are there any other distinct "possibles" than those to which that same will guides this intelligence.

657. But why then did JESUS CHRIST after His Resurrection say to the Apostles: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth: going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"?(1) Why did He send them to all nations, and not to all individuals, when all power had been given Him in heaven and in earth? Was it perhaps because He did not love the salvation of each and every man? On the contrary, He loved it infinitely, because His love was divine. But it was the complex good of all mankind that He aimed at. Further, the desires which had the salvation of each individual for their object, the desires of particular goods, came into conflict and excluded one another. As a consequence, those desires necessarily prevailed which were directed to a greater good, I mean to the realization of the largest total of final good, the grand central object of all. In order to bring about this realization, it became also necessary to permit the loss of some individuals, as an unavoidable condition. Nevertheless, it would seem allowable to conclude from the words of Christ, that if some individual necessarily perishes that the *maximum* of good may be obtained, the same necessity does not apply to *nations*, to each of which the Incarnate Wisdom sent His messengers; and He never sends in vain. Hence these words accord admirably with those which the same Incarnate Wisdom uttered so many ages before: "I have stood in all the earth: and in every people and in every nation I have had the chief rule."(2) He does not say "in every individual." They are also a fulfilment of the ancient promise made

(1) Matth. xxviii. 18, 19. (2) Ecclus. xxiv. 9, 10.

by God to Abraham: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" (1) and not "all individuals." Hence the prophetic canticle so often repeated in the Ancient Covenant: "O praise the Lord all ye nations, praise Him all ye peoples." (2) In these places, and in many others of similar import, no mention is made of individuals, but the salvation is affirmed of all races grown into nations, with that comprehensive view which belongs to wisdom.

658. Now, this same principle, that the All-Wise has one sole object of His action—the complex sum total of good—and obtains it by a most simple act, throws great light also upon all the economy of God's government of mankind, and especially upon the mystery of the reprobation of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles. For, why does St. Paul say of the Hebrews that "by their offence salvation came to the Gentiles," that "their offence is the riches of the world, and their diminution the riches of the Gentiles," and "their loss the reconciliation of the world"?(3) The Apostle simply means to say that God in His Eternal Wisdom saw that to permit that many Jews should refuse to believe in His Christ was an evil necessary for attaining the *maximum* of good by the least means; and He therefore permitted it, sacrificing some Jews to the salvation of all the nations of the earth. It would take too long to show how this was necessary, and we shall refer to this subject again. The Apostle, however, tells us plainly the end which God had in view in abandoning for a time a portion of the Jewish nation to their wilful unbelief. God, he says, "hath

(1) Gen. xxii. 18. (2) Ps. cxvi. 1.

(3) Rom. xi. 11–15.

concluded all in unbelief, that He MAY HAVE MERCY ON ALL." (1) Thus, good is always the end of God's action, the *maximum* of good which is possible consistently with the Law of the Least Means. Indeed, if this law requires that all good should be made to germinate and grow out of the intellective creature without any superfluous, extraordinary intervention from without, it became the All-Wise, Who had to fulfil this law, to act in such a way as to draw from the very weakness of this creature, from its very unbelief and moral perversity, every kind of good which it was, directly or indirectly, capable of yielding. Hence, from the aberrations which God permitted so many ages in the heathen world, mankind received the strongest practical proof of the insufficiency of the light of their reason, and the impotence of their free-will to attain the final moral eudemonological good; while the aberrations of the Hebrews afforded a similar proof in regard to the insufficiency of even the positive law, although given from above for their salvation. Thus it became manifestly apparent, that human nature needed the Man-God to rescue it from perdition. It had a tangible demonstration that only by a gratuitous gift bestowed upon it by God, namely, by the grace of the Redeemer, could it obtain its end. Nor could this nature acquire so precious a knowledge otherwise than by its own experience; for it is only by its own experience that it is able to know itself aright; and the Law of the Least Means forbids its being supplied by a divine intervention with that which it can draw from itself. Now, this experimental knowledge, accompanied by the influence of grace, by humbling man,

(1) Rom. xi., 32.

raises him up to God, on Whom he sees that his whole self and his eternal happiness depend. Again, this knowledge of his need of God and of God's gratuitous mercy, open to all who should humbly acknowledge their need thereof, was man's *sanctity*, the only and the greatest good for the attainment of which it was wisely permitted that many should be lost. Hence, this permission, in the judgment of God, Whose Goodness and Wisdom are infinite, was not only just, seeing that man was left with his own, but, all things computed, good also, nay, an act of Supreme Goodness, and a goodness most wise, because a necessary means for that which was the very best that could be.

659. Finally, if we consider that in the complex whole, in the *maximum* of good which creation is capable of yielding, there must be seen not merely a union of beings, but a stupendous order and harmony between them, we shall have a fresh proof of the necessity of evil, as contributing to the moral beauty and perfection of the whole. This argument is illustrated by St. Thomas thus: "The good of the whole takes precedence of the good of the part. It belongs therefore to a prudent governor to permit some deficiency of goodness in the part, in order that there may be an increase of goodness in the whole. Thus the builder of a house hides the foundation underground, in order that the whole house may stand more firmly together. Now, if evil were taken away from certain parts of the universe, much of the perfection of the universe would also disappear, seeing that its beauty arises from the ordered adjustment of goods and of evils. For, although where there is a deficiency of good, evils come in, nevertheless those evils, through

the Providence of the Ruler, become the source of certain goods; in the same way that the interposition of a pause in a song contributes to the sweetness of the melody." (1) And here it should also be borne in mind that the beauty of order is not a thing extraneous to the good of intelligent beings; since it is they that contemplate that beauty, and receive light and pleasure from it. Hence, even on this account, to place order in the universe is to do good to intelligent natures.

(1) St. Thomas, Contra Gent. Bk. iii., ch. 52, 6.

CHAPTER XXV.

NINTH CONSEQUENCE.—IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THE WORLD SHOULD BE GOVERNED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF WISDOM AS EXPOUNDED ABOVE, IN ORDER THAT THERE MIGHT RESULT FROM IT THE GLORY OF GOD, THE END FOR WHICH THE UNIVERSE WAS CREATED.

Hominem fecit, cui INNOTESCERET.
St. Theoph. ad Autolyc, II. x.

660. What has been said above enables us to form a clear notion of the *Divine Glory*, which is the end of the universe.

For, by the word *Divine Glory* we must understand the manifestation made to intelligent and moral creatures of the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God in the unity of His action.

661. If God, setting aside His Wisdom and His Goodness, had made all things by His Power only, He would not have been entitled to any glory; because it is no glorious thing to be possessed of mere brute power, blind and not directed to any good end.

In truth, what is glory? Nothing else than the applause which intelligence gives to intelligence. Now, an intelligence cannot applaud the action of mere blind power, but only an action wherein power is disposed with wisdom and goodness. Therefore, to God, Who in virtue of His very Essence must always in His actions follow the Laws of Wisdom and of

Goodness, which incline Him to economize His power, belongs of right the highest glory.

662. Hence it is that the Fathers of the Church observe that God never combats the wicked by His Power alone, which indeed might annihilate them in an instant; but He overthrows them chiefly by the use of Wisdom and Goodness, a forbearance He shows even to the devil. Wherefore St. Justin the Martyr, in the second century, wrote that God had disposed that the Christ should be born of a woman having a husband, in order to conceal from the devil the Divine Incarnation. Upon this St. Bernard comments as follows: "It was necessary that the mystery of God's counsel should for a certain time be kept hidden from the prince of this world; not as though God feared lest, if He did His work openly, He might be prevented: but because He did all things that He willed, not by Power only, but also by Wisdom. And as He had been wont in all His works to observe a certain fittingness of things and of seasons for the sake of the beauty of order; so in a work so magnificent as this of our reparation, He was pleased to show forth, not His Power only, but His Wisdom likewise." (1)

663. These words afford a splendid confirmation of the truth upon which we insist, namely, that the Law of the Least Means requires that God should, as far possible, economize His Power, which, by itself alone, gives no claim to glory, and that He should, on the other hand, make the largest use of the attributes of Wisdom and of Goodness, to which praise is justly due from those who contemplate them. This same end, of obtaining the praise justly due to God, and alone worthy of Him is assigned by the great Pontiff St. Leo

(1) *Homil. ii. Super Missus est.*

as the reason why God willed that human nature itself, assumed by the Person of the Eternal Word, should vanquish the devil, thus hiding under the lowly garb of our mortality the Omnipotence by which He might have subjugated the fiend at pleasure, but without glory to Himself. He says: "This great combat undertaken in our behalf (by Christ) was waged according to a great and admirable rule of equity. For, the omnipotent Lord enters the lists with a most cruel enemy, not in His majesty, but in our lowliness; opposing to him the same form and the same nature which partook of our mortality, yet so as to be wholly free from sin. For, the Son of God, in the fulness of time disposed in the unsearchable depths of the Divine counsel, took to Himself our human nature, in order to reconcile it to its Author; so that the devil, the inventor of death, might be vanquished by the same nature which he had vanquished."(1) Here we see quite plainly that God preferred to bring about the overthrow of the devil by means of human nature itself rather than by a direct use of His Omnipotence. And since human nature could not bear so transcendantly great and exquisite a fruit by its own powers, the Eternal Word was added to it, to enable it to do so; this surplusage, if I may so call it, of Divine action, employed for such a purpose, being judged by God to be well and wisely expended.

664. In many places of the Book of Wisdom, God is extolled by reason of this economy and saving of His Power, prompted by His most wise Goodness. Thus, referring to the plagues inflicted on Egypt, the inspired writer is filled with admiration at seeing how

(1) *Sermo i. De Nativit. Domini.*

God punished the Egyptians by sending upon them a multitude of minute insects. "For (he says) Thy Almighty hand, which made the world of matter without form, was not unable to send upon them a multitude of bears, or fierce lions, or unknown beasts of new kind, full of rage, either breathing out a fiery vapour, or sending forth a stinking smoke, or shooting horrible sparks out of their eyes; whereof not only the hurt might be able to destroy them, but also the very sight might kill them through fear. Yea, and without these they might have been slain with one blast, persecuted by their own deeds, and scattered by the breath of Thy power. But Thou hast disposed all things in measure and number, and weight."(1) In the following chapter he again undertakes to show how the Wisdom and Goodness of God restrained His Power, not permitting its full display in driving away from Palestine the corrupt races which inhabited that country. Let us hear him: "Yet even those Thou sparedst as men, and didst send wasps, forerunners of Thy host, to destroy them by little and little. Not that Thou wast unable to bring the wicked under the just by war, or by cruel beasts, or with one rough word to destroy them at once; but executing Thy judgments by degrees, Thou gavest them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they were a wicked generation, and their malice natural and that their thought could never be changed. For it was a cursed seed from the beginning; neither didst Thou for fear of anyone give pardon to their sins. For so much then as Thou art just, thou orderest all things justly: thinking it not agreeable to Thy power to condemn him who deserveth not to be punished.

(1) Wisd. xi. 18—21.

For Thy power is the beginning of justice: and because Thou art the Lord of all, Thou makest Thyself gracious to all. For Thou showest Thy power when men will not believe Thee to be absolute in power, and Thou convincest the boldness of them that know Thee not. But Thou being master of power, judgest with tranquillity, and with great favour disposest of us: for Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt. But Thou hast taught Thy people by such works, that they must be just and humane, and hast made Thy children to be of a good hope; because in judging Thou givest place for repentance for sins."(1)

The august title of "Master of Power" which is here given to God, shows how the attributes of Wisdom and of Goodness are those which direct His Power and moderate it. The declaration, too, that "in God, power is the beginning of justice," shows that His Power is informed by justice; so that it does not move, save in so far as Justice, which is its form, sets it in motion. And as regards the word *justice*, it seems to me that it should in this place, by an extension of meaning very frequent in Holy Scripture, be understood as indicating all moral good, and therefore mercy also, which makes use of power for working its wonders, by changing men's hearts from wickedness to virtue, and tempers it by mitigating and delaying the punishment due to sin.

665. Now, the Divine Glory which penetrates and shines forth throughout the universe is of two kinds; the one substantial, namely, that which God gives to Himself, and the other accidental, namely, that which intelligent creatures give to their Creator.

(1) Wisd. xii. 8–19.

As glory is the applause which an intelligent being gives to an intelligent being, so the glory which God renders to Himself is that approbation which He gives to His own works, and which is expressed in those words of Genesis: "And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good."(1) This does not mean that in God there is any distinction of time between doing His work, and taking complacency in seeing therein the vestiges of His own Wisdom and Goodness. No; He was, as we have seen, inclined from eternity to bring contingent being into existence, loving this as a realization of the eternal ideas, or rather of that one typical idea of the universe, in which His Will, perfect by essence, found whatever of wise and of good could be manifested in contingent things. Hence this same approbation which God gave to what He eternally saw of wise and good in the exemplar of the universe, and which inclined Him to create it and govern it, this very same approbation, I say, is what constitutes the glory which He gives to Himself for having created it. For, there never was a time when the universe stood distinctly before God in a state of mere possibility, having indeed been created by Him in time, but by an act which is eternal even as the possible is eternal.

Now, the exemplar in which God saw from eternity the world as created in time, and in which He commended His work, most justly taking complacency in it, and glorying in it most holily, is the Eternal Word. Accordingly, when the Redeemer prayed, saying: "And now glorify Thou Me with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee," (2)

(1) Gen. i. 31. (2) John xvii. 5.

He then referred to that glory which He had, and had always had as the Divine Word, in Whom the Father approvingly beheld from eternity the typical universe *(il mondo esemplato)*, and, beholding it, created it. Hence by that sublime prayer He asked that the glory which the Father had already given from eternity to the Word as seeing in Him the exemplar of the universe, should, as the Father also willed from eternity, be realized in time, and communicated to the Humanity of the Word. For, to the Word as containing the type of the universe, that glory of Paternal approbation had never been wanting; but it had still to be realized and communicated in time to the same Word in so far as He was made man; for the Humanity of Christ was the Word's own Humanity. Wherefore the Redeemer was not asking for the glory which belongs to the Word as the Father's likeness dwelling in light inaccessible; but He was asking for that glory which belongs to the Word as having in Himself the typical universe, wherein the Father lovingly beheld a man assumed by the Word to Himself, and receiving his personality from Him, and to this man He beheld every thing, every glory of the Word, communicated. Consequently, if in the eternal type the glory of the Word was seen as communicated to His Humanity, that glory had also to be realized in time; and for this did Christ ask. And he asked for it because this realization in time was to be effected by way of impetration, through His prayers, which prayers were likewise seen in the eternal type. It was to be effected also by way of merit, through His labours in preaching the Gospel, through His heroic virtues, and through the magnanimous offering which He made of

His life ; all which things were similarly seen marked by God's decree in the same eternal type. Thus the realization of the glory which Christ was to receive in His Humanity risen from the dead, was conditioned to His own action ; and hence in His prayer He refers to the fact of His having already accomplished all that had been enjoined on Him, that is to say, of His having, before receiving the glory, realized that part of the exemplar which it was incumbent on Him to realize. As, therefore, He had by His most holy life "fulfilled all justice," it only remained that the other part, that which belonged to the Father Himself, should be completed and realized. "I have glorified Thee on the earth : I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee."(1) And Christ said that He had accomplished the work, although He had not yet suffered, because of the most complete and perfect oblation which He had already made of Himself, and of the Unbloody Sacrifice which was celebrated at His Last Supper, and which was equivalent to the reality of His Death, to the *Consummatum est* which He pronounced on the Cross.

666. Accordingly, when Christ, as man, asked the Father for the realization of that glory which was destined for Him from eternity, He simply asked that that one inclination and volition which God from eternity had for the creation of the world, should receive its full effect in time. For, the exemplar of the world, although but one, comprised many successive states, all of them to be

(1) John xvii. 4.

unfolded and successively realized even to the last and final one, in respect to which the rest stood in the relation of means and ways, while this itself was to remain eternally as the complete and perfect state of creation.

At the same time, it should be observed, that the world contemplated in this its final and permanent state, the *archetype* as it were of those that preceded it—though all disposed in perfect unity and harmony, has, nevertheless an order in its parts. There are in it parts which constitute the end of the world, and there are parts which do not, properly speaking, constitute the end, but are conditions indispensable to those that do. The parts which constitute the end are the elect in the state in which they will be found after the resurrection; and Christ is their head. Hence St. Paul writes: "But every one (will be quickened) in his own order. The first-fruits Christ; then they that are of Christ, who have believed in His coming. Afterwards the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God and the Father, when He shall have brought to nought all Principality, and Power, and Virtue. For He must reign 'Until He has put His enemies under His feet.'(1) And the enemy death shall be destroyed last, for 'He hath put all things under His feet.' (2) And whereas He saith, 'all things are put under Him,' undoubtedly, He is excepted Who put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then the Son also shall be subdued unto Him that put all things under Him that God may be all in all." (3)

(1) Ps. viii. 8. (2) Heb. ii. 8.
(3) 1. Cor. xv. 23–28.

This, therefore, is the eminent part of the Divine Exemplar of the world, that to which all the others are ordained, and whose realization is, as St. Paul declares, the end of all things without exception. Hence, the creative and ordering Wisdom takes complacency and rests in this final state of the elect, as we are told in an inspired book: "I alone have compassed the circuit of heaven, and have penetrated into the bottom of the deep, and have walked in the waves of the sea, and have stood in all the earth: and in every people, and in every nation I have had the chief rule: and by my power I have trodden under my feet the hearts of all the high and low: and in all these things I sought REST, and I shall abide in the INHERITANCE OF THE LORD;" (1) which inheritance are precisely the elect. Accordingly, our Divine Master bids us say in our prayer to the heavenly Father: "Thy kingdom come," thus to hasten the complete realization of the Eternal Exemplar, the *final state* of things, when Christ, as the Apostle says, will deliver up to the Father the kingdom conquered by His own valour.

667. Such also is that which St. Paul calls the "day of rest for the people of God," (2) namely, that last state in which Divine Wisdom, having ended His work, takes complacency and glories in it with Himself for all eternity—a state which had been represented even at the beginning of things by the seventh day, of which we read in Genesis: "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had done." (3) And it was, I believe, in order that the

(1) Ecclus. xxiv. 11. (2) Heb. iv. 9.
(3) Gen. ii. 2.

whole human race might ever be deeply impressed with the sacredness of this last end of things, this great END for which man especially was created, and to which he must direct all his affections, his endeavours, and his actions; that the sabbath was from the beginning of the world instituted as a solemn day, a day of abstention from all material labour, and afterwards inculcated by so many and such rigorous laws, and sanctified by so many rites.

668. God, then, from eternity takes complacency, and from eternity glories in His work, the world, not by reason of its mere reality, the effect of His Power; but because in its reality there are expressed and manifested the vestiges of His Infinite Wisdom and His Infinite Goodness. He glories in it because Infinite Power displays itself therein under the guidance of Wisdom, and Wisdom displays and diffuses itself under the prompting of Goodness. Now, man also, as an intelligent and moral being (and the same may be said of every intellective creature) sees in the world with more or less penetration the same vestiges of Wisdom and Goodness; and he learns from them to know the Wisdom and Goodness of the Infinite Artificer, and approves of them, and applauds Him, and gives Him glory without end.

Here we must consider that man attains to this exalted knowledge of the Creator, supremely wise and good, by various degrees; for he has not in himself, like God, the whole Exemplar of the world, but gathers and derives the knowledge of it from the perceptions he receives from creation and from the meditations he makes on them. Aided by the lights which Revelation and Grace impart, he advances by

little and little from the sign to the thing signified (for the world is nothing but a sign), and so by degrees traces out and delineates that exemplar in his own mind. Now, what serves him as the clean canvas on which to draw his lines, is that ideal and indeterminate being of which he has intuition by nature, and which contains all entity in an indistinct state, in a way analogous to that in which a large block of marble contains all the statues which the sculptor proposes to make out of it, or a given superficies all the figures that can be designed thereon. And although the perceptions which man receives from creation are very few in comparison with the immensity of things, they nevertheless suffice to cause him to recognize such rays of Divine Wisdom and Goodness as enable him to divine, I would almost say, that infinite Sun from which they emanate. Wherefore, on seeing the Creative Wisdom and Goodness reflected as it were in so small a mirror, he has occasion for the exercise of faith, and for adoring the depths of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, into which he is unable fully to penetrate. His intelligence, however, attains to more of that Wisdom, the further he advances in the knowledge of created things, and, in a reverent spirit dives deeper into that knowledge, and all that he thus attains is as a spark which kindles in his heart the love that is due to the Creator.

But not only is man limited in his contemplation of the Supreme Wisdom and Goodness by his inability to embrace the vastness of creation, so that, however far he may penetrate into it, he can never understand more than an infinitesimal portion: he is furthermore limited for this reason, that the real world unfolds

itself before him by means of facts which happen in succession, and presents to him only one state at a time out of the many through which it has to pass, and which are all found in the eternal exemplar. And this is a fresh reason why understanding should lead man to faith; for at the same time that this intellect sees a link of the immense chain, it makes him aware that there are other links still remaining hidden in the dark future. But each individual, before the world has run its course, comes by death to the end of his own, and, if he has acted according to the light and the grace which he received, he is admitted to the vision of God's face, as it is written: "The wisdom of doctrine is according to her name, and she is not manifest unto many; but with them to whom she is known she continueth even to the sight of God."(1) In that vision, therefore, man finds his end, and awaits in repose the ultimate state of the universe, of which indeed he already contemplates the Eternal Exemplar. And the greatness of the knowledge of the Creative Wisdom and Goodness acquired by this contemplation forms the subject-matter of a new canticle whereby he renders to God a glory more explicit than he could render on this earth, and already final; although abundant matter will also be furnished to the same canticle by that inaccessible light which will even then transcend the power of the creature. And so God will be praised and glorified chiefly on account of this final state, which had been pre-ordained in the far distance as the completion and the crowning summit of the universe, and with which the events which have ever been or will ever be unfolded are most

(1) Ecclus. vi. 23.

strictly related as means, and form with them one stupendous unity.

Since, then, this constitutes the ultimate perfection of all intelligent-moral creatures, it follows that the whole order of the universe was to be so disposed as to obtain that these creatures might, by searching into it, come to perceive the Wisdom and Goodness of God, first by parts, and then in their complex, and, admiring and loving them, might give boundless and unceasing praise to Him. For, this praise is, as it were, a natural vent given to the exuberant feelings of the intellective substance, and the last word whereby it pronounces its rightful approbation, and in pronouncing it finds satisfaction and happiness. This approbation, this applause which the creature most willingly gives to the Creator known, loved, and admired as supremely wise and good, is itself a part, nay, the final part of the Eternal Exemplar. Thus the very praise which is offered to the Wisdom and Goodness of God contemplated in creation, becomes the most sublime monument of the same Wisdom and Goodness. Hence it comes to pass, that the same act by which the creature is perfected, gives it new and more excellent matter for praising the Creator; so that here also we find that marvellous and never-ending circle which we have elsewhere admired in the order of moral things, (1) and in virtue of which all moral good becomes the object of other and more sublime moral good in perpetuity.

669. This doctrine is pregnant with most important

(1) See *Comparative and Critical History of the Systems regarding the Principle of Morality* ("Storia Comparativa," etc.) Ch. viii., art., iii., § 7. Vol. II.

corollaries, and wishing to recapitulate and continue it, we might reduce it to the following propositions :—

1st. The praise which the intelligent creature gives to the Wisdom and Goodness of the Author of the universe, that is, the complex of contingent beings and of all their successive states, constitutes the very highest moral perfection which it is possible for it to attain.

By the word *praise* we here understand that ultimate act of approbation which the intellective creature is inclined to make, and does voluntarily make when it perceives and recognizes the Wisdom and Goodness of God in those real signs and vestiges of them which are communicated to it. Man is a mixed being, having a body which, by its movements, seconds the feelings of the soul, and in the body having a vocal organ inclined to produce as many sounds as are the words interiorly pronounced by him. In these spontaneous sounds, then, he discovers so many indications of those pronouncements. And whereas the pronouncements themselves are transitory, he is helped by the sounds to recall them to mind, to repeat them with ease, and to give them consistency. Hence, he is pleased with these sounds, and makes use of them for satisfying the need he has of rendering vivid to himself, and multiplying as well as producing those internal judgments, which, but for their aid, easily vanish. Here we find the origin of poetry and of song, and of that especially which the Church of God on earth has always used from the beginning of the world for celebrating the praises of the Creator. Vocal sounds, however, and sounds generally, are not the essence of the praise rendered to God by intelligent beings. They are rather the effect or spontaneous outburst

which internal and intellectual praise produces in the animal part of man, who, as I have just said, finds in them a valuable aid for conceiving that praise in his mind, for preserving it in the memory, and for reproducing it, and musing on it with delight.

But if the praise given by an intellective being is essentially nothing else than the *approbation* which that being pronounces internally, it is plain that when that praise has for its object the Supreme Being, it must be the ultimate act of the moral perfection of a creature. For the knowledge of the Creator is so identified with the perfection of the intellective creature, that our Divine Lord Himself said: "Now this is eternal life that they may know Thee, the only true God, and JESUS CHRIST, Whom Thou hast sent." (1) He says that this knowledge is life; because it is impossible to know God by positive and practical knowledge without at the same time experiencing a feeling of joy. And He calls that life *eternal;* because this is that joy which, of itself, never fails nor cloys. Now, the ultimate part of this knowledge, the part which actuates and completes it, is that internal pronouncement which exults in a full and most willing approbation whereby the very personality of man assents to the light which it sees, and delights in it beyond measure.

670. 2nd. As the *moral perfection* of the intellective creature is the end of the universe, the only end worthy of God; so that praise or *glory of the Creator* is likewise the end of the universe.

671. 3rd. Again, this praise, this ultimate act of the moral perfection of the intelligent creature, this

(1) Jo. xvii. 3.

end of the universe, is the most sublime part of the Divine Exemplar, that to the realization of which all the rest is ordained. Hence God, Who loves the world in the Exemplar of which the world is the realization, loves, above all, this praise which creatures give Him, and is from eternity well pleased with it, applauding Himself for having realized so great a good, and thus largely diffused His own Goodness among creatures. For, even in God the approbation which He gives to Himself is conceived as the summit of the moral good which He is to Himself. And the creatures which give Him this praise draw the chief motive for praising Him from this very praise to which they are ordained; approving their approbation as the greatest good communicated to them by God from Himself. Thus, while the praise and glory which they render to God is being continually redoubled, they continually redouble to themselves the joy with which they are filled to overflowing, making their very joy the subject and the motive of joy ever new. For, by their mode of action they partake of the moral goodness of God Himself, inasmuch as the same thing becomes the object of their goodness which is the object of God's goodness; and thus they are perfectly consentient with God, and consummated in one and the same term with Him.

672. 4th. Accordingly the moral perfection and the intellectual joy, both of wayfarers on this earth and of the heavenly comprehensors, has for its object God, the Author of the world. By *world* we mean the complex of all created things, and of all the divers states through which they pass, even to the last, that of the vision of God; by which vision intelligent

beings, perceiving in God the Divine Act which creates the world, and contemplating its exemplar, see in that exemplar the beatific vision itself, which is its crowning excellence, destined for them as at once the reward of merit and a gratuitous gift. We must say, then, that in the beatific vision that which will cause God to be known and praised by intelligent creatures will still be the work of the universe, whose design they will, in Him, see unfolded, and in its immense complex most brilliantly resplendent with infinite wisdom and goodness. For this Divine work, in its exemplar and in the eternal decree which designs it by creating it, is nothing else than God Himself, God's own countenance. (1) It is true that they will also understand that, besides what they see and comprehend of God, there is, too, in Him a light inaccessible which it is absolutely beyond their power to grasp, and which is, therefore, a motive of eternal adoration for creatures, which in the Incomprehensible Infinite are, as it were, lost in self-annihilation. But this losing of themselves in the abyss of the Divine

(1) The essences of created things have not, in the Divine Word, any real distinction, because the Word is most simple. Their distinction arises from the creative decree, and must therefore be considered as a *relation* between that decree, that is to say, its terms, and the Word. Hence, in God it is impossible to see creatures in their distinctness without seeing God's creative decree and the Word to which the terms of the same decree refer. The defect of Malebranche's system is therefore evident in that, by maintaining that bodies are seen by us in God, it implies of necessity the vision of God Himself. And so too is the inadequacy of the defence which Cardinal Gerdil attempted to make of that system, by endeavouring to prove that things can be seen in God without God Himself being seen. For, if things were seen in God without God being seen, things in God would have to be distinct from God, and really distinct from one another; and this would take away from God His perfect simplicity, in virtue of which there is in Him no other distinction save that of the Divine Persons.

Essence is, again, itself a part of the end of the universe, and as such is already found and seen by them in the creating and typifying Word, of Whom it is written: "Upholding all things by the word of His power,"(1) and again: "In Him we live, and move, and are," (2) and again; "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether Thrones, or Dominations, or Principalities, or Powers: all things were created by Him and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist."(3) Here it is to be noted that the title of *First-born* belongs to the Word inasmuch as He is the exemplar and creator of the world;(4) and inasmuch as He is such, He is that Wisdom of Whom it is written: "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the First-born before all creatures. I made that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth, and as a cloud I covered all the earth:"(5) and He goes on describing the work of creation. He is also the God Whose vision is the beatitude of souls; hence it is said of Christ that "On Him the Angels desire to look;"(6) the meaning of which words is not that the Angels look on the Word in that wherein He is incomprehensible to all creatures, but in that wherein He manifests Himself. Hence they contemplate Him as the Author and Redeemer of the world, and therefore desire to look precisely on the face of "The Christ" or the Word Incarnate. Accordingly the Apostle teaches that God showed forth His Wisdom and Goodness through-

(1) Heb. i. 3.
(2) Acts xvii. 21.
(3) Coloss. i. 15-17.
(4) See *Restoration of Philosophy*, etc.
(5) Ecclus. xxiv. 5, 6.
(6) 1. Pet. i. 12.

out the entire system of the universe in such abundance for the very end that Wisdom and Goodness might be the object of the knowledge and admiration even of the Angels, and matter for their praise, in which they feel immense delight:—"That the MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD may be made known to the PRINCIPALITIES and POWERS in the heavenly places through the Church." (1) And speaking of created intelligences generally he says: "That He MIGHT SHOW them in the ages to come the ABUNDANT RICHES OF HIS GRACE." (2)

673. 5th. Therefore, between that contemplation of the Wisdom and Goodness of God in creatures, which is possible in this life, and the vision we shall have of them in the heavenly mansion, there is this difference: that here we gather their vestiges laboriously from creatures—as from so many mirrors, wherein those vestiges are reflected, or enigmas which contain them in diminished outlines, and which present themselves with succession of time:—and so we compose to ourselves imperfectly some small part of the Eternal Exemplar; whereas in heaven we shall see in God the whole of creation, and what we see will be God. At present, then, all creatures are for us nothing but *signs* of eternal truths and of immutable essences; (3) they are as

(1) Ephes. iii. 10. (2) Ephes. ii. 7.

(3) This reminds us of the metaphysical propriety as well as the sublimity of some expressions in Holy Scripture, wherein great and glorious men are called signets or seals, that is to say, signs, of the power and wisdom of God. Such, for example, is the interpretation given to those words in the Book of Job: "The seal shall be restored as clay, and shall stand as a garment" xxxviii. 14; the word seal meaning the greatness and the power of men as a sign of the power of God. Thus also Ezechiel calls

a language which God employs for the purpose of making Himself understood by intelligent beings. They are not themselves the truth, nor is there anything final in them. They are, as I have just said, but so many expressions and indications of that which is final and divine. And here we meet again within a marvellous circle which belongs to the *synthesism* of being. For, if contingent natures are nothing else than a few signs indicating Eternal Being and Eternal Truth to created intelligences, what are, I ask, these intelligences themselves? Unquestionably, they are at one and the same time beings to whom the *signs* are given that they may, by means of them, soar up to Eternal Being, and they are themselves also *signs*. For, in so far as they are *intelligent subjects*, they read in this book of the universe the eternal truths; but in so far as they render themselves objects of their own thought, they constitute some of the letters with which the whole of this book is written, and which, when read aright, signify and show forth the divine ideas; so that intelligent creatures might not inappropriately be defined as so many living letters, which decipher and understand their own meaning.

674. 6th. Not a single fragment of creation is lost in the eternal ages; not a single event, however small—engraven as it is on the Divine Being—is ever lost; none of the accidents that have ever occurred in the

the King of Tyre "the seal of resemblance," namely, the seal which made that King to resemble God: "Thou wast the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty," Ezec. xxviii. 12. So likewise in Aggeus, God promises Zorobabel that He will make him as a signet of Himself: "In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will take thee, Zorobabel the son of Salathiel, my servant, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts" (Agg. ii. 24).

succession of times, are then useless or superfluous to the bliss of the heavenly comprehensors. Seeing in God the stupendous connexion of things, the unity of the whole in the immense multiplicity of the parts, the fitness of even the least part with the whole and its necessity to the most simple and most sublime end of creation; and perceiving all this in the most holy volition of God, Who in the intelligible essence sees that which of all contingent productions is the best, and in seeing it loves it, and in loving it wills it, and in willing it creates it (because volition here is omnipotence)—seeing and perceiving all this, I say, they exhaust their powers in giving glory to the Creator, and herein they find supreme happiness, while still feeling that they cannot give Him all the glory which He deserves.

675. 7th. From this it also follows, that God could not have obtained the end of the universe, namely, the manifestation of Himself, His Wisdom, and Goodness, to intelligent creatures, unless by ordering the world as He has done—all by the rule of art divine, and constantly maintaining the essential Laws of Wisdom, that of the Least Means being the chief.

676. If all these things are understood, no one will presume to require that God should by His power break the Laws of His Wisdom; as those do who, murmuring against Providence, do not scruple to give utterance to such expressions as: "What does it cost God to work miracles, if He is omnipotent? Could He not banish all evils from the world? Could he not prevent the committing of sin, bring the wicked to salvation, hinder the ruin of those who are lost?"—Certainly He *could;* but it was not by Power alone that it behoved Him to frame and order the world.

Had He done so, the end for which the world was created would not have been attained. For, that end was that the world should be a complex of *signs* of His Wisdom and Goodness, so that finite intelligences by rising through these signs to the knowledge of the All-Wise and All-Good, might give Him glory without ceasing; and in thus glorifying God, find the highest degree possible of their own moral perfection, and thence attain everlasting bliss.

677. This enables us also to answer another difficulty which might occur to some minds. It is this: "If God has made everything for the end of the universe, and if this end consists in the beatific vision, could He not have admitted created intelligences to this vision immediately, leaving aside all the rest?" This difficulty vanishes as soon as one considers the theory which I have given of the beatific vision, and the fact, which must never be lost sight of, that "all created things are limited," and that this puts a limit as it were to the power of God, namely, to the things produced by it. The consequence is that no creatures, even though admitted to the beatific vision, can totally comprehend the Divine Essence; so that God always remains for them, in part, a hidden and inaccessible God. Let it be well noted that the creative act is God Himself, as also is the providing act, the act of the Divine Incarnation, and that of the sanctification of men; because every act of God is God. (1) So long as man is a wayfarer on this earth, He sees and expe-

(1) Hence those admirable words of St. Thomas: "Creation taken in the active sense signifies God's action, which is His essence with relation to the creature. But the relation of God to the creature is not real, but notional only *(secundum rationem tantum)*." (S. p. I., q. xlv., art. iii., ad 1m.)

riences the effects and the *terms* of these Divine acts; in heaven he beholds these same acts in their *principle* and in their essence; and they are, in reality, one act only, the very same act as that of God's Essence. In this way he sees all the Divine Essence that is communicable to created minds, and as it were flowing into them: nor could it be otherwise. It was therefore requisite that God should create the universe and do in regard to it all that His Wisdom and His Goodness saw right and proper, in order that it might be possible for the creature to have the beatific vision.

678. Once more, then: none of the vestiges of the wisdom and goodness which are scattered throughout the universe, or rather which are the universe, are lost as regards the end of the universe itself, namely, as regards the beatific vision. For this vision consists in nothing else than in beholding, in their source, these vestiges, or the universe; and the universe in its source is the very Essence of God communicable to creatures. Consequently, of all that successively occurs in the universe nothing perishes. And the evils permitted by God for obtaining the good He has in view, and the inferior grades of created beings, and the imperfections which are unfolded in every possible variety, in each grade, are all ordained to the attainment of a single whole disposed with Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, which the heavenly comprehensor sees in God, and which in God is God, and which therefore constitutes the mode wherein the comprehensor sees God, and wherein alone He can see the original Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, which is God. For, God Whom he sees is not detached from the universe, but

conjoined with it as its principle, the principle whence the universe receives its being, and preserves it in perpetuity.(1)

679. It follows from all this, that although the laws of God's action which have so far been set forth—namely, that of Gradation, of Variety, and of Excluded Equality—show His Infinite Wisdom and Goodness in the universe even before it has reached its final state; nevertheless we may, and must now, transport them into that final state itself, and consider them as necessary for producing a condition of things most excellent and most sublime, wherein the series of beings and of events has no longer any succession of time, but is most present, being all collected together, in a unity full of divine harmony and of every kind of good.

680. In truth, if we consider how effectually the law of *Excluded Equality* contributes to the greatest good of the blessed in heaven, we shall easily see that a good comes to them from it which they could obtain in no other way. In fact, in virtue of this law, it comes to pass that each of the blessed is unique in his full species.(2) Now, the standing alone in the possession of a given excellence adds to the delight which springs from that possession. Nor must this be supposed to detract in any way from charity, as it might seem at

(1) I say *in perpetuity*, because nothing that God has brought into existence is annihilated, although it changes form.

(2) The *abstract species* includes a great number of *full species* (among them one at least complete), which are so many modes of the identical species. See the *Origin of Ideas*, nn. 646-656. Thus the *abstract* human species is one only, but the *full species* are as many as can be the ideal varieties of man.

first sight, and as is the case here on earth, when this longing for unique excellence happens unfortunately to be mixed up with individual passions. It is not so in heaven. For, the blessed love the uniqueness of their respective excellence solely for the reason that each sees himself chosen for adequately realizing a full specific essence, without there being any necessity of others participating in it. And he therefore feels a similar delight in seeing that each of his companions is equally unique in the essence proper to him. As this delight refers to the eternal essences of things, it is manifest that it refers to God in Whom those essences are founded. Hence we can see in like manner, that this singular delight which an intellective being derives from seeing himself unique in a given specific excellence is one of those which follow not from the limitation of created beings, but from the very nature of being and its intrinsic order; it is an ontological, not a cosmological law; so much so, that even God delights in His own uniqueness, inasmuch as He sees in Himself the whole of being realized.

681. If we consider the laws of *Gradation* and *Variety* in the influence they have for increasing the eternal happiness of the blessed, we may draw thence two important reflections.

In the first place, the ideal essences could not be fully known to intelligent creatures unless they were realized in all possible modes. For, until they are realized, the modes which they severally contain are altogether indistinct, or rather, as modes, they have no existence. Hence the creature cannot perceive the fecundity of an essence if the distinctions do not exist. Now, the way in which the mind that contemplates a

single essence distinguishes its modes is by limiting it. But the mind cannot, by its thought, limit an essence unless those limits are presented to it by which, as by so many signs or lines of demarcation, it defines in that essence those special modes which are in fact so many possibilities of real beings. Where, then, will the mind find these limits? Nowhere else than in beings realized in such a way that none of them, taken singly, make perfect equation with, or exhaust, the entire essence.

Some of these limits are arbitrary, that is to say, the reason of them is not found in the being of which there is question. To this class belong, for the most part, the limits relating to quantity; and these are not indispensable for knowing the fecundity of an ideal essence. Others are necessary; for instance, those relating to such qualities and accidents as exclude one another. In order, therefore, that all the modes in which an essence can be realized may be distinctly understood, it is requisite that many real beings should exist. Now, supposing that God willed to communicate His Wisdom and Goodness to created intelligences, clearly, He must have furnished them with the means of knowing all the fecundity of the ideal essences of beings; since it was only in this way that the understanding and the love of creatures could, from the real beings perceived, rise to a full knowledge of those essences; in which, as we have seen, the intellective as well as the real act terminates. It was, therefore, only through the gradation and variety of the real beings of which the universe consists, that man, while a wayfarer on this earth, could rise to a perfect contemplation and moral appreciation of the

essences of things; and hence that gradation and variety was necessary to his intellectual and moral perfection: and the same must be said of all other created intelligences.

Now let us transport this reasoning to the beatific vision, such as I have described it. In that vision man finds this gradation and this variety, and contemplates them in the whole series which they embrace; a thing he cannot certainly do here on earth, where he perceives only some few links of the chain, and some few varieties. Moreover, in heaven he contemplates them in their original source, by seeing God; because that gradation and that variety, in the relative Divine act and in the Divine Word, with both of which they have relation, is God Himself. Consequently, the wisdom and goodness of that gradation and variety are then a part of the essential Wisdom and Goodness of God; because the act which produces them, and in which they are seen, is God's own Essence. If, then, this act is God's Essence, visible to the blessed, and if the same act is determined by its terms, to which the said real gradation and variety belong, it manifestly follows that the gradation and variety of beings are conditions upon which the beatific vision depends, and which determine, so to speak, its quantity and its mode. So closely are creatures linked with their Creator! So intimately are all the successive states of the universe connected with the final state of the heavenly comprehensors, and so necessary both to their happiness and to the glory which they render to God!

682. The second reflection which has to be made is similar to that which I have drawn from the law of

Excluded Equality. I observed that this law must dominate in creation even for the reason that, without it, one of the most exquisite kinds of good which the blessed can enjoy—that of each seeing himself adorned with an excellence reserved for him alone—would have been lost. Now, we must consider that without the Laws of the *Gradation* of beings and of their *Variety*, a good would have been lost to human nature, for which it has a very keen longing; I mean the good of *superiority*. This observation is not new, but it seems to me excellent and important. St. Thomas, among others, makes use of it for indicating Divine Providence in the following passage:—"Perfect goodness would not be found in created things unless there were in them an order of goodness, so that some should be better than others. For, without this, there would not be realized all the degrees of goodness possible (NON ENIM IMPLERENTUR OMNES GRADUS POSSIBILES BONITATIS); nor would there be any creature resembling God in this, that it is eminent above others." (1)

(1) It is also well worth while to quote the words in which St. Thomas, a little further on, proceeds to show that the inequality of beings, and evils also, are necessary in order that a given essence of things may be made to yield all the *kinds of good of which it is capable*. He says: "If there were perfect equality in things, there would be only one kind of created good, a thing manifestly derogatory to the perfection of the creature. Now the superior grade of good is this, that there should be something so good that it cannot fail in goodness. And the inferior grade is that there should be that which can fail in goodness. Therefore, the PERFECTION OF THE UNIVERSE requires both these grades of goodness. Now, it belongs to the providence of a governor to preserve perfection in the things governed, not to lessen it. Therefore, it does not belong to Divine Providence to exclude entirely from things the power of failing in good. But from this power there follows evil; because that which can fail sometimes does fail" (by the law of *Probability* which I have explained before, 277), "and the mere defect of good is an evil.—Consequently it does not belong to Divine

683. It is certain that man naturally feels pleasure in his own superiority over other beings. Only two questions may here be raised about this *longing for superiority*. 1st, Whether it be nothing more than the effect of the corruption of human nature, so that it would not exist if nature were perfect. 2nd, Whether it be at least a consequence of the unavoidable limitation of contingent beings, so that it does not belong to the order of being itself, is not an ontological but a cosmological property.

684. As regards the first question, my answer is that the longing for superiority, considered in itself (apart from the abuse and the wrong application which corrupt nature makes of it) proceeds not from the corruption of human nature, but from nature itself. The reason which seems to make one doubt as to whether the contrary may not be the truth, is the very same which engenders the erroneous suspicion of an evil origin in the longing for unique excellence. That reason is the abuse which man in his fallen state so often makes of both these longings. The wish to satisfy his natural cravings, without regard to the laws of justice and of goodness, makes them degenerate into mere blind, exclusive, over-bearing instincts. But, cleared of these evil qualities, and considered in themselves, these desires are good.

Now, in order to understand how they are good, it is necessary to inquire whether it be possible, in our

Providence to prevent all evils in the governed" (*Contra Gent.* Bk. iii., c. lxxi., 2). Let it be observed that it is the constant practice of St. Thomas to start from the principle that *the universe must be perfect*, and that nothing can be conceived in it better than what actually takes place; because otherwise the work would not correspond to the infinite skill of the Artificer.

case, for the *uniqueness of excellence*, and the *superiority* of one being over another, to be a righteous act, nay, demanded by justice and goodness itself. For, given a single case in which they are found not to offend against either justice or goodness, we may at once ask whether they have in them the nature of good. Now, as we have seen that this case is verified in respect to the uniqueness of excellence, (680) so we may say the same in respect to superiority; for superiority also may be just and good, if it is distributed by God according to merit.

The question therefore is: Whether the superiority of one being over others, free from all moral evil, can be a natural object of desire for man in an unfallen state. And I answer in the affirmative, by having recourse to the principle which we have stated above, "That it is impossible fully to understand the excellence of a prerogative contemplated in an abstract essence unless that excellence is perceived or seen distinctly in all the several grades in which it can be realized; abstract essences not being sufficient, by themselves alone, to show to the human mind which contemplates them all the fecundity of which they are capable." Now, if a man or another intelligent being possesses a given excellence, it is just that he should enjoy it, indeed that he should draw from it all the delight which it can give him. If, therefore, Infinite Wisdom were not to furnish him with the occasion and the means of knowing fully his own excellence, he would remain deprived of a part of the delight which he might justly draw therefrom; and so one of the goods which might be obtained from human nature would be lost. But a created being cannot

fully understand its own excellence if it does not take account of the various grades in which it can be realized. It is, therefore, requisite that there should exist inferior beings, in order that those which are superior, seeing distributed amongst them the excellence which they have collected in themselves, may form a full appreciation of its value, and thus enjoy their own superiority. The pleasure, then, of finding oneself superior to a great many others is simply a means of becoming fully acquainted with one's own excellence, and hence delighting in it to the fullest extent possible. This delight is just and good, and it does not spring from a corruption of nature, but is an appetite consequent upon nature itself.

Hence we find a superiority assigned to man even from his first creation: "Let us make man to Our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth." And when the woman also was created, God said to them both: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth." (1) Dominion is given, not to Adam only, but to Eve likewise; because she being, like him, possessed of human nature, shared his craving for superiority. To Adam, however, God granted a superiority over Eve and the offspring that should be born of them, for which reason He called the woman man's *help*, and made her out of him; and St. Paul, comment-

(1) Gen. i. 26, 28.

ing on this, says that "The man is the head of the woman." (1)

685. But if superiority is a good befitting human nature, and if God, by a law of His Wisdom, wills to draw from His creatures all the good possible, and to dispose things so that every kind of good may attain its highest perfection, may be developed to the fullest extent of which it is capable; the obvious consequence is that the good consisting in man's superiority must attain its *maximum*. The primitive condition of mankind was not favourable to the realization of this result; for, man could not exercise dominion over his fellowmen save in a limited measure; because they differed but little from him in excellence; and they had not much need of His governance. Here, then, was a fresh reason why it behoved Eternal Wisdom so to dispose events that that primitive condition should be changed into one more favourable to the development of this great good of human nature—superiority. Otherwise this nature could never have produced all the good of which it had in itself the germ; nor, consequently could it ever have exhausted in its developments the essence of human nature contemplated and willed by God. *Sin* was therefore permitted, an accident which gave occasion to the greatest inequality among men. To this inequality consequent upon sin, God Himself at once very plainly referred when He said to the woman: "Thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee." (2)

Now, sin causes inequality among men in many

(1) 1. Cor. xi. 3. (2) Gen. iii. 16; 1. Cor. xiv. 34.

ways. In the first place, as by sin men are rendered weak, vacillating in their thoughts, and inclined to evil, it becomes necessary that human society should be constituted with a stronger and more compact order; that the evil-disposed should be kept in check by force; that the ignorant should be instructed by those who are their betters in knowledge; and that the inconstant should be governed by fixed laws, or certainly that one will, either individual or collective, should rule the others, thus keeping them within certain proper bounds, which, very many of them are in their waywardness continually ready to transgress. Hence the origin of a ruling class (sovereigns, masters, lawgivers, etc.); and under them a dependent class (subjects, disciples, citizens, etc.). In the second place, God, having in His mercy willed to open the way and afford the means of obtaining justification even to sinners if they wished it, there arose of necessity an immense inequality, all internal, between the condition of the wicked and that of the just; an inequality recognized even in the earliest period of humanity, when, as we learn from Genesis, the wicked were called the *children of men*, and the just the *children of God*, (1) forming, as it were, two cities, over one of which God presides, and over the other, the devil. Now, the difference between the just and the wicked is infinite; and it is fitly symbolized by that firmament which divides the superior waters from the inferior, and also by that "great chaos" which in the Gospel is said to separate irremediably and for ever the rich man who was wicked, from the poor beggar who was just. (2)

(1) Gen. vi. (2) Luke xvi. 26.

686. But if our human nature, in accordance with the Law of the Least Means, must yield all the good possible, it was also necessary that there should be realized in mankind all the inequality possible, and hence that there should be, on the one side, the *extreme of wickedness*, and on the other the highest *degree possible of justice;* that so He Who was the holiest of all men might have dominion over all the rest in their degrees, down to the one whose wickedness was greatest; such being the only way in which there could appear in humanity the *highest* of all superiorities possible. To the attainment of so great a purpose, it was indispensable that there should be among men one who would descend to the lowest possible depths of human malice; and this will be Antichrist; and one also who would ascend to the highest possible summit of sanctity; and this was Christ. That the former should appear, is a Divine permission; that the latter should have been born, was God's own work. Hence we find the *superiority* of Christ over the whole human race, and over the devils themselves extolled throughout Scripture. We are informed that He is sitting at the right hand of the Father, above all the angelic choirs, and that the series of events is being unfolded for the end of bringing all things under Him, according to those most solemn words which the Father addresses to the Son, and which begin: "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool." (1)

687. Another thing to be observed is, that all the divers kinds of superiority, as also all the classifications

(1) Ps. cix. 1.

of things, may be reduced to three supreme categories. In fact, as there are three categorical excellences—that of *power*, that of *wisdom*, and that of prevalent *moral goodness*—so there are three kinds of superiority; and it was requisite that human nature should, on the one hand, rise to the highest possible summit of each of the three, and on the other, sink to the lowest depth of the inferiorities corresponding to them.

688. To the superiority of power belongs vengeance upon one's enemies. Consequently, it was fitting that there should be developed in mankind two widely different societies, the one good and the other evil; of which the first should dominate in the most triumphant manner and eternally over the second: that moreover in the first as well as in the second there should be a graduated hierarchy; one, of thrones ascending step by step until they rose even to the right hand of God; the other, of grades of evil sinking step by step until they reached even to the lowest depths of the abyss. In the hierarchy of the good there was to be inferiority of those who were less to those who were more perfect. And yet this was not to interfere in the least with the fulness of the joy of any; because the good do not love nor desire for themselves all kinds of superiority, but only that kind which is just; and as in those who excel them in goodness, superiority is just, so they love to see it in them, and love to be beneath them. In the hierarchy of the wicked, on the contrary, all superiority is hated and a source of torment; nor can even those who possess it find any delight in it, because they hate justice, and the hatred of justice is a torture.

689. Let us now pass to the second question, which was: "Whether the longing for superiority belongs to

the *ontological* order or only to the *cosmological*, in other words, whether it proceeds from the very nature of being, or from the limitation of contingent things." I answer, that it is natural to God to give glory to Himself even for His works *ad extra*, which manifest to finite intelligences the magnificence of His Wisdom and Goodness. For He is infinitely well pleased with them in Himself, in Whom they are in virtue of the act whereby, seeing them by a voluntary and creative vision, He makes them to be. He must, therefore, be infinitely happy also for this: that He is above all contingent being, and the infinite source thereof. This relation between contingent and necessary being, is in God the reason of the glory which He renders to Himself, and which belongs to His Own known excellence. We must therefore say, that the delight felt in superiority belongs essentially to the very order of being, and, considered in itself, does not spring from the limitations of contingent things, although it involves an eternal relation with them in the same way as the word *supreme* involves a relation with that which falls short of the supreme.

690. Let us refer all this to the beatific vision of the heavenly comprehensors. In it they see their superiority: and the gradation of all that stands or stood beneath them shows them most clearly how great a good is contained in their own excellence; even as the gradation of what is above them shows the greater excellence of other beings, and thus gives them occasion to love justice more and more in the just superiorities of others. And all these graduated excellences are also seen by them in God as belonging to Him in an eminent manner. For, he who sees God, sees that

all the unspeakable excellence and goodness of creation is collected in God Himself as in its fountain, entirely simplified, eternal, essential, no longer the goodness of created things, but the Goodness of that God Whose face they behold, and of Whose Divine Goodness created things afford only the faintest trace.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONTINUATION.

691. All that has been said is simply a consequence of the principles laid down, which it may be well briefly to recapitulate as a help to the continuation of our argument.

"Do nothing without a *sufficient reason:*" such is the fundamental Law of Wisdom, the law which determines the *end* as well as the *mode* of all wise action.

This first law, when applied to the *mode* of action, produces a second, which we have called the Law of *the Least Means.*

This second law requires a principle of application; and we found that the principle of its application to the government of contingent beings may be thus expressed: "Govern these beings in such a manner that they may produce by their own aptitudes all the good which they can possibly yield."

The fecundity of this principle revealed itself to us when we passed on to consider it in the generation of sundry other laws which preside over the government of the universe, namely: the law of the *Non-Intervention of God* in nature without necessity; that of *His Intervention when necessary;* that of *Excluded Superfluity;* that of *the Unity and Harmony of the Universe;* that of *the Gradation of Beings;* the laws of *Variety*, of *Excluded Equality*, of the *Unity of God's Action*, of the

Manifestation of God in Time, and of *His Manifestation in Eternity*, wherein all passing events become consistent and necessary, the means of the Divine Glory, the ultimate end of creation.

It is necessary to pay particular attention to these two last laws, which we have explained in the preceding chapter, and which are founded on the principle "that it would have been impossible to manifest to the intellective creature the Wisdom and Goodness of God, otherwise than by means of the work of creation, either perceived in itself, as is the case with man in this present life, or contemplated in the Divine essence, as is the case with the heavenly comprehensors."

This most important truth deserves very serious consideration: we will make a few more reflections upon it.

692. Created beings cannot realize to themselves the Supreme Goodness of God unless they at the same time realize to themselves His Wisdom; because goodness cannot be supreme save on condition that the will is guided in its action by Supreme Wisdom, a wisdom which directs the action so that it shall produce the *maximum* of good possible. To understand, therefore, that without the work of creation it would be impossible for the Goodness of God to be manifested to finite intelligences, it will be enough to understand, that without that work His Wisdom could not be manifested to them. Let us begin, then, by examining whether without the work of creation it would be possible to manifest the Wisdom of God to contingent intellective beings.

693. In the first place, if there were no creation, there would be no contingent intellective beings; therefore nothing could be manifested to them.

694. In the second place, let us suppose that none but intellective beings were created, and that God communicated to them at once the vision of His Own essence. This communication between God and these beings would be a supernatural completion of the creative act itself; (1) because God by a single act, creative as well as beatific, would have for term those creatures, and rest in them. They would, therefore, still see God in so far as He acts in them as creator and perfecter. Hence the object of their vision would always be the Divine Essence, not as it is in itself, apart, so to speak, from its action, but in so far as it acts with wisdom and goodness in creatures. Creatures, therefore, could only understand so much of God's Wisdom as is manifested to them in the creative and beatific act, whereof the Divine Essence would show itself to them as the root, source, principle, foundation, or in whatever other way one may think more accurate to denominate it. Therefore the *quantum*, so to speak, of Divine Wisdom cognizable by creatures is, neither more nor less, that which shines in the Divine Essence in so far as it communicates its Goodness to them, in so far as it produces creatures in that state, more or less perfect, in which they are, that is to say, in so far as it puts forth more or less of its Wisdom and Goodness by acting in them. Thus if in the multiplicity of beings that people the universe there is more or less perfection; if there are in them more or fewer vestiges of wisdom; we must say that there is more or less of Divine Wisdom that

(1) Hence St. Thomas: "Charity is what unites us to God, Who is THE ULTIMATE END OF HUMAN INTELLIGENCE *(mentis humanæ)*. S. p. II. II. q. clxxxiv., art 1.

can be manifested. For, that Wisdom which manifests itself in the Divine Essence is proportionate or analogous to the vestiges of wisdom imprinted on creation. In order, therefore, that there might be seen in the Divine Essence a mode of wisdom of supreme excellence, it was requisite that the work done in creatures should be disposed with supreme wisdom. It is true that he who sees God is aware that, besides the wisdom which he contemplates in God in a limited manner, there is another abyss of Wisdom into which his vision cannot penetrate, and this is to him the subject-matter of eternal adoration. Yet even what remains of God not comprehended, not seen by him, profits him solely because he forms a certain negative concept of it from that which he positively comprehends and sees.

695. It will be said that God in giving Himself as an object of vision to the creature can communicate to it as much of His essence as He pleases, and hence can manifest to it His Essential Wisdom and Goodness to any extent He pleases.—I answer, yes, certainly; but only on condition that He first renders the creature fit and able to receive that modal part (1) of His essence which He wills to communicate to it. The reason is that this modal part must be received by the capacity of the creature which has perception of it. Accordingly God could not manifest His Essence to a stone, or to a brute unless on condition of first giving

(1) The most simple Essence of God cannot be divided even in so far as it is conceived by man; but the *mode* of conceiving it may vary and may be more or less perfect. To express in what sense a finite being is said to perceive the Divine Essence in a limited manner, the name of *modal essence* is given to the essence itself in so far as it corresponds with the limited manner in which it is perceived.

to the stone the faculty of intelligence (which is an absurdity), or raising the brute to the state of an intelligent being, when it would no longer be a brute. Therefore, the communication of the Divine Essence cannot be effected save in a mode accommodated and proportional to the natural faculties; and to pretend the contrary, involves contradiction. And although the *natural faculties* can never by themselves attain to the perception of the Divine Essence, nevertheless there is found in them the *capacity* of receiving from God the *faculty of that perception;* and this new faculty is, so to speak, grafted by God on the natural faculties through the communication of the *light of glory*, as theologians call it, which is the Divine Essence itself. And since God is seen by the intellect, the intellect is the natural faculty which has the capacity for being ingrafted with the supernatural faculty of vision. Hence, although the object of the vision is infinite, nevertheless the faculty of seeing that object, being subjective, is finite, because the subject who receives it is finite, and the faculty itself bears a proportion to the natural-subjective faculty, upon which it is grafted. (1)

If, then, we wish to ascertain what is the *necessary limit* of this faculty of vision as given to man, we must consider what his natural intellect is; and the same would apply to any other intellective being. Now, the nature of the human intellect is known by its form, which is universal and indeterminate being. In this being, taken by itself, no species, no germ, no differ-

(1) St. Thomas says: "The created intellect does not see the Divine Essence according to the mode of that Essence itself, but according to its own mode which is finite." (S. p. iii., Supplem., q. xcii., art. 3, ad 3m.)

ence, no reality is manifested. Hence in order to enable man to know real beings and their differences, *feeling* has been given to him, which, defined in general, is not limited to the external senses, but is "the faculty of perceiving every reality which acts upon man's reality." Special notice should be taken of this definition, which embraces, not the human feeling only, but also that of every perceptive being; for every perceptive being has a feeling, without which it would be dead. Hence flows the consequence, that "since it is by the reality of the percipient subject that the feeling caused in it by the action of other realities is experienced, every faculty of feeling has a limit determined by the amount of reality of which the percipient subject itself consists. The feeling, therefore, of which the human subject can be capable is proportional to the amount of its own real entity. Now, this amount may be known by considering what are the subjective and real faculties of human nature. They are: 1st, the faculty of animal feeling; 2nd, the faculty of spiritual feeling; 3rd, the faculty of mixed feeling. As this last feeling is the result of the two first, consequent upon the unity of the human subject, it cannot afford us any help for determining how far the human feeling is capable of attaining. We will therefore consider the two first.

Animal sensitivity produces sensions which mark in universal being intued by man certain differences, whence arise first specific, and from these again, by abstraction, generic ideas. Now, these generic and specific ideas depend for their formation upon those sensions in such a manner that, without them, they

could not be.(1) Hence, supposing that God willed to infuse them into a human being who had never known them, He could only do so by exciting within him those sensions, or images or vestiges of sensions to which such ideas refer. To say the contrary would be an absurdity; because the idea of a thing felt is nothing but the relation of that thing with ideal being; and no relation is possible without its terms.

Let us pass to the spiritual sensitivity. The feeling which man has of himself arises in him in consequence of the animal sensions; hence it may be called a mixed sensitivity. It is true that man, as intelligent, that is, as possessed of the intuition of universal being, has a feeling of himself as subject, and this feeling may be called a purely spiritual sensitivity. But it should be noted that this latter kind of sensitivity is not such as to be capable of becoming an object of thought, independently of any animal sension moving man to reflection upon himself. Given, however, that man turns his reflection upon himself as intelligent, he then forms the specific idea of man, and affirms his own existence. Now, it is plain that God could not infuse into him that idea and that intellective perception unless by infusing into him at the same time the human feeling to which the idea and the perception refer. The reason is, as we have indicated above, because that idea is nothing else than ideal being limited by the said feeling, and that perception is nothing else than the

(1) How it is that we do not positively know beings save to the extent in which they act upon us, was explained in the *Origin of Ideas*, nn. 1203–1208; and for the reader properly to understand what is said here, it is indispensable that he should have formed a clear conception of the principles there laid down.

affirmation of the relation between ideal being and the feeling; which relation would be impossible without the terms from which it results. From this we may understand in what the sensitivity of the human intellect, that is to say, of man as having the vision of being, consists. It is a feeling produced by the being which is seen in him who sees it, by the object in the subject. It is the subject feeling the presence of the object; which object, if it is not the pure ideal essence of being, but has the very reality of being added thereto, augments the fundamental feeling of the subject, and consequently the subject himself.

This guides us to the forming a correct notion of how it is possible for man to attain to the perception of God's own reality.

That reality is of such a nature that it corresponds to, and makes equation with, the ideal and universal being which constitutes the form of the human intellect. God must, therefore, give Himself to be seen, not merely as an ideal, but as a real form of this intellect. In ideal being man must see revealed, must feel, apprehend the real. And this communication of God's reality must be so made that, whilst it raises man to a wonderfully higher state than he held before, it does not change him into another being. Man's intellect, although elevated, must remain of the same nature, that is to say, a human intellect.

Now, ideal being, the natural form of the human intellect, is ordered in such a manner as to admit of being marked by the divers realities of which man, by his sensitive faculties, feels the action. Indeed, the primary purpose for which it is intended is precisely

the receiving into itself all these marks; they being all virtually contained in the fundamental feeling which constitutes him that subject which he is.

Accordingly, in order that God, in manifesting Himself, may adequate Himself to all those signs and realities which the ideal being seen by the human intellect is capable of manifesting, without at the same time adding anything further (otherwise the nature of this intellect would be changed); He must of necessity manifest Himself as the origin or fountain of all those realities which are destined to produce those marks, in other words, as that act by which He creates man and the universe, and in which alone the universe subsists. Thus is it that the Divine Essence adapts itself to the human limitation or subjectivity, and thus only can it completely exercise all the human faculties, and make their possessors perfectly happy in the vision and enjoyment of Himself.(1)

(1) I do not by this mean to say that the blessed in heaven must necessarily see in God all that He knows by that which Theologians call *scientia visionis* [the knowledge of contingent things, past, present, and future]. In the first place, perhaps not all created things are proportionate to man, and to his powers of feeling: perhaps man, by reason of the special nature of his feeling, is constituted in a system of things which is limited, and peculiar to himself. Let us hear St. Thomas: "It is not necessary that he who knows the cause should know all its effects, unless he entirely comprehends that cause, a thing which no created intellect can do. And hence each of the blessed in heaven sees in the Divine Essence all the more things, the more clearly he sees that Essence; from which it comes to pass that, regarding these things, one may be able to instruct others. And so the knowledge of the Angels and of holy souls may go on increasing until the day of judgment; as also other things belonging to the accidental reward. But beyond that day there will be no increase; because then THINGS WILL HAVE REACHED THEIR FINAL STATE, and in that state it is possible that all should know all the things which God knows SCIENTIA

696. It should be carefully noted, that in case God should will to manifest Himself only in so far as His reality corresponds with the indeterminate being which shines in the human intellect, and not in so far as it corresponds with the marks whereof that indeterminate being is susceptible, man would certainly feel the presence of an infinite and absolute Being, and hence would affirm that Being to himself. That vision would alone suffice to place him in a supernatural state; and it is what constitutes the state of sanctifying grace. For, in this state, if man is able to reflect sufficiently upon himself, he comes to perceive that there is an Infinite Reality, and that the being of this reality is identical with the intelligible being which he sees in the idea. From feeling the identity of this infinite Being, at once real and intelligible, there

VISIONIS (S. p. iii. *Supplem.*, q. xcii., art. 3). Nevertheless, even in the final state of the universe, in which all the blessed will see all contingent things (or at least those belonging to their own system), they will not see them all in the Divine Essence, but only a part; while regarding the rest, they will be instructed by Christ. "Not all" (says again St. Thomas) "see all things in the Divine Essence. But the SOUL OF CHRIST will there clearly see them all, even as it sees them now. Others, on the contrary, will see more or less of them, according to the degree in which they will know God: and so the soul of Christ, in those things which it alone sees in the Word, will illumine all the others. Hence it is said in the Apocalypse (ch. xxi., v. 23) that 'The glory of God shall enlighten the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the Lamb is the light thereof.' And in a similar way others of a superior rank will enlighten those beneath them, not indeed with a new illumination causing the knowledge of the inferiors to increase; but by a certain continuation of the illumination, such, for example, as would be understood if one were to say that the sun by remaining still would illumine the air. And for this reason it is said in Daniel (ch. xii., v. 3), that 'They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.'" *(Ibid. ad 12m.)*

results to him a fulness of joy which is of its nature infinite, and which he also feels to be a new act of the same infinite Being, identical in three modes.

Nevertheless in this Being, which is the whole of being, man does not discern any other thing, because there is as yet, while he remains in the said state, no contingent reality to refer to Him, nothing finite to see in Him. In this way God is communicated to man as ALL; but man does not as yet necessarily see the action proper to this all, neither that which it exercises internally towards itself, nor that which it exercises towards other things. In short, he sees only a reality which adequates the *indeterminate idea of being*, and is the origin thereof.

Such is, beyond doubt, the state in which Saints in the New Covenant are constituted upon this earth; such the order of that justice graciously imparted by the Saviour. Man has through it a perception of God; but the act whereby this perception produces all that it produces remains within him hidden from view: it is as the perception of God's power which virtually comprises all, rather than that of its act. Still, God's power is His Essence; hence there is here a certain vision, but only such as is given by the light of Faith, which does not suffice to explain to man the mystery of the universe, and to give him complete beatitude.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TENTH CONSEQUENCE.—GOD FOLLOWS IN HIS ACTION THE LAW OF HEROISM, THAT IS TO SAY, THE LAW OF EXTREMES.

699. The Laws of Wisdom and Goodness hitherto explained are, therefore, necessary. Dispensation from these laws there could be none, not only because God is Himself Essential Wisdom and Goodness, but also because without them He could not have obtained the end for which the universe exists, namely, His glory.

Having thus found a fresh corroborative proof of the necessity of these august laws by considering the end of the universe, we may now proceed with the task of unfolding them in their applications, in which they will, it seems to me, acquire increased efficacy for dissipating the objections which human ignorance puts forward against the supreme government of Providence.

700. We will begin by drawing a new consequence from the laws of *Continuity*, *Variety*, and *Unity* of God's Action. It is, that "God in His action in the universe follows the Law of Heroism," or, in other words, the "Law of Extremes." In fact, the difference

between the conduct of ordinary men, and that of heroes, lies precisely in this, that whilst the former do not go out of the beaten track, and stop at mediocrity, the latter, according as they are well or ill disposed, push good and evil to the very farthest limits, stopping at nothing. Whatever enterprise they take in hand must be carried to the fullest completion of which it is capable, and the type of which stands vividly before their mind. Hence, if well disposed, they will be paragons of virtue, whereas if they are inclined to evil, they will be utterly perverse and wicked. Now, this is how God acts, Who, if I may be allowed the expression, is certainly the greatest and best of Heroes.

701. Holy Scripture alludes to this character of God's action by saying that Wisdom "reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly." (1) The *might* of God's action shines forth in His attaining infallibly every effect which He proposes to Himself; and its *sweetness* is shown in His bringing about the effect intended without interfering with the free course of secondary causes, even when they seem to act in opposition thereto; so that in the end, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, they all conspire to the fulfilment of the design of the Omniscient.

Hence this sublime Law of Extremes embraces both the *end* and the *means*.

702. If we consider it in relation to the end, namely, to the effect which God proposes to Himself, it follows as a consequence from the Unity of God's Action. For

(1) Wisd. viii. 1.

in virtue of this Unity, by a single eternal act all things are made, and the government of the universe is directed to a single aim, namely, the attainment of the greatest good which it is possible to draw from created things. Now, for the very reason that this *final good* is the greatest which creatures can yield, it is the last extreme attainable. Accordingly the inspired words which tell us that God "reacheth from end to end" are preceded by the declaration that this fact is, as we have said, due to the unity of God's action:—"Being but ONE, She (Wisdom CAN DO ALL THINGS, and remaining in Herself the same, She reneweth all things, and through generations conveyeth Herself into holy souls, and maketh the friends of God and prophets.... For She is more beautiful than the sun (which illumines the whole world), and above all the order of the stars (whose rays traverse such immense distances): being compared with the light, She is found before it. For after this cometh the night, but no evil can overcome Wisdom (which shines equally in all times). Therefore (mark the consequence) She reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."(1

703. If the Law of Extremes is considered in relation to the *means*, it is found to flow from the laws of *Continuity* and *Variety*. For, all beings in their gradations, as well as their varieties and their acts, are, in the hands of God, means ordained to the accomplishment of His one purpose, insomuch that even evils become subservient to the final sum of good; as is clearly indicated by those words just quoted, "no evil

(1) Wisd. vii. 27.—viii. 1.

can overcome wisdom." Indeed, no amount of human or diabolical malice, no deficiency of creatures, no perversity of will, can hinder the attainment of that end of supreme goodness which Divine Wisdom intends, or diminish by never so little its perfection; they can only contribute to it as means necessary for its complete realization.

704. All things, then, from the greatest to the least, are ordained and used by God's Wisdom for His end; and that is why it is written: "I fill heaven and earth." (1) And in the admirable Psalm the 138th God is magnified, because by His Wisdom and Goodness He reaches all things, so that nothing can be hid from His sight or escape from His grasp. It is humanity which there speaks to its Maker in the following strain: "Lord, Thou hast proved me, and known me: Thou hast known my sitting down, and my rising up. Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off: my path and my line Thou hast searched out. And Thou hast foreseen all my ways: for there is no speech in my tongue. Behold, O Lord, Thou hast known all things, the last and those of old: Thou hast formed me, and hast laid Thy hand upon me. Thy knowledge is become wonderful to me: it is high, and I cannot reach to it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there: if I descend into hell, Thou art present. If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in

(1) Jerem. xxiii. 23, 24.—In this place God says that He is not far from, but near to, all things: "Am I, think ye, a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Shall a man be hid in secret places, and I not see him, saith the Lord? Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?"

the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. And I said: Perhaps darkness shall cover me: and night shall be my light in my pleasures. But darkness shall not be dark to Thee, and night shall be light as the day: the darkness thereof, and the light thereof are alike to Thee. For thou hast possessed my reins, Thou hast protected me from my mother's womb. I will praise Thee, for Thou art fearfully magnified: wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knoweth right well. My bone is not hidden from Thee, which Thou hast made in secret: and my substance in the lower parts of the earth. Thy eyes did see my imperfect being, and in Thy book all shall be written, days shall be formed, and no one in them." (1) Such is the language which suits humanity; such are the sentiments of perfect humanity, as it was in Christ.

705. God, therefore, by His Wisdom and His Action, reaches extremes, both in the natural and in the supernatural order; a very frequent theme this for canticles of praise in Holy Scripture. David exclaims, "the name of God is worthy of praise from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same," the two extremes of breadth; to which he immediately adds, that "The Lord is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens; but that although He dwelleth on high, He at the same time looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth," (2) thus reaching the two extremes of height and of depth. And St. Paul, making allusion to this passage of the Psalms, exhorts the Ephesians to strive after the know-

(1) Ps. cxxxviii. 1-16. (2) Ps. cxii. 3-6.

ledge of these extremes of the Divine greatness; "That you may be able (he says) to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, and height and depth." (1)

706. God reaches extremes in the *sphere of reality* by His Power, creating in each species of real beings all the links of the chain from one end to the other, and unfolding all their varieties.

He reaches extremes in the *sphere of intelligence*, establishing a wonderful harmony among all beings in their gradations and varieties (repetitions of the same type excluded), and causing them all to work together for one sole end.

He reaches extremes in the *sphere of morality* by so disposing everything that this one sole end of all beings shall be the *greatest moral-eudemonological good* which they can possibly yield; and that the whole of the immense mass of realities, although devoid of intelligence, and the whole complex of intelligences, although free, shall serve *moral being*, shall contribute to produce it in the fullest possible measure, to make it happy, and to render honour to it. Hence the praise given to God by the Royal Psalmist for this, that "He raises up the needy from the earth, and lifts up the poor out of the dunghill, that He may place him with princes, the princes of His people. And He maketh the barren woman to dwell in a house, the joyful mother of children;" (2) all which means that God brings to happiness and to glory the just who trust in Him in spite of adverse appearances, makes them triumph over all the power of real

(1) Ephes. iii. (2) Ps. cxii. 7-9.

being, and over all the devices which intellective being opposes to Him for a time.

707. He likewise makes the whole of the *natural order* serve the *supernatural;* and for this purpose He sends down the Eternal Word from His infinite height, so that He may become by His extreme abjection even the last of men. (1) And then He causes this last among mortals to run the same course in a contrary way until He is raised up even to the Father's right hand: "He that descended (says St. Paul) is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS." 2) How entirely consonant this is with God's perfections, was seen in some way even by natural reason, as may be proved by the following words of Plato: "God, as an ancient tradition tells us, by embracing the *beginning*, the *end*, and the *mean* of all things, pursues a good course, circling round according to nature. And He is always accompanied by judgment, punishing those who deviate from the Divine law." Whence, with reasoning well becoming that noble mind, he draws the consequence that "He is happy, who, being mindful of that judgment, follows a way of humility and temperance."(3)

(1) Isai. liii. 3. (2) Ephes. iv. 10.

(3) *De Legibus.* IV.—On this passage of Plato we may observe: 1st, That he quotes this doctrine, not as his own finding, but as having been received from an ancient tradition, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος; 2ndly, That from the consideration of the greatness of God, Who disposes all things, and Whose power no one can withstand, he derives the precept of ***humility***, which bows down to Divine Providence and allows itself to be ruled by its decrees, κεκοσμημένος ταπεινὸς. It is one of the extremely few passages of pagan writers in which humility is mentioned and praised. The Greek word ταπεινὸς

708. As to the glory which results to God from reaching by His Wisdom and His Goodness both extremes, we may form some idea of it from the ecstatic wonder which fills created intelligences when, knowing the immensity of God's work, they clearly understand on the one hand the greatness and goodness of its aim, and on the other the vastness and the difficulty of the calculation which is necessary in order to attain that aim. God, according to our human mode of conceiving, had to foresee, and to take into account, all the combinations that are possible amongst all beings, as well as all their relations, and reciprocal actions and influences. From all these He had to single out for existence such as would answer the purpose, and no others; thus harmonizing everything, down to the very atom which escapes the observation of the senses. Not the most minute blade of grass, not the lightest fluttering of a leaf, not a single thought of an intelligent being might be selected for existence without its being first considered in relation with all other beings and all other actions, however small and slight, and without its being found opportune. So that we may say that there was as great a difficulty in deciding as to whether it would, or would not, be well to create and

corresponds with the *humilis* of the Latins, low, vile; 3rdly, That this duty of humility and submissiveness to Divine Providence which disposes all things is the first of those which Plato would have imposed on the colonists who were to form his Republic, and he begins with it the discourse which, in his opinion, ought to be addressed to them when they arrive at the places destined for their habitation. Thus is submission to God, to His laws, to His Providence, recognized by the Athenian Philosopher as the foundation of civil prosperity; and this is exactly the foundation of the Christian Commonwealth.

to cause such and such motion to be given at each successive instant to one elementary unit of air or of light, as there was in determining the form of the entire universe. Seeing all this, the creature understands at last what an absolute power of control over all things was required for making such a calculation. Then, bewildered by the splendour of Divine Wisdom, at the thought of so overwhelmingly vast a work, created intelligence gives itself up for vanquished, and the created will can find no affections with which to honour Divine Goodness as it deserves. This annihilation of the creature before the Divine Greatness goes on increasing in proportion as the creature, by induction, advances in the knowledge of the work of the Creator: but the completion of this knowledge is reserved for the vision of God in heaven.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONTINUATION.—THE LAW OF ANTAGONISM.

709. Seeing, then, that the Law of Extremes, as just explained, plays so prominent a part in God's action in the universe, it may well be worth our while to consider more in particular how this law—which is identical with that of Heroism—is carried into effect.

The heroism of God's mode of action is manifest in that terrible and continual conflict between created things, in which God, as Champion of the just, whilst seeming vanquished, is always victorious, and this without expending the least degree of power beyond what is necessary for obtaining from creation the very greatest amount of good possible. Now, this is what I call the *Law of Antagonism.*

710. It is plain that, if it was becoming for Divine Wisdom to produce beings in a continuous gradation and with a tendency to develop in all their possible varieties, a most terrible conflict must inevitably ensue. For, this development would proceed in directions the most opposite, so as to touch the last extremes of both good and evil. And as beings are nothing but a combination of forces, so there would have to be a most powerful activity for evil, and a most powerful activity

for good; each seeking to prevail and wax stronger to the injury and overthrow of the other.

711. This condition of the problem of the universe made it all the more difficult to solve in the way intended by Divine Goodness. For, the purpose of that Goodness was to direct things so wisely as to make the cause of good triumph in the most complete manner, notwithstanding, nay, by the very means of, the opposition of the powers of evil, allowing these free scope to act: so that the amount of final good would have been less, if there had been no conflict, or if evil had been prevented from putting forth all its powers. It is in this supreme difficulty of solving the great problem with perfect success, that the Wisdom and Goodness of God reveal themselves to created intelligences in their greatest splendour.

712. Hence in numberless places of Holy Writ we find God described as a dauntless warrior who vanquishes his enemies: "The Lord is as a man of war, Almighty is His name." (1) In the Psalms He is called the "God of Hosts," (2) the "King of powers," (3) a "Lord Who is high, terrible, a great King over all the earth," (4) and, as such, He is continually invoked: "Judge Thou, O Lord, them that wrong me: overthrow them that fight against me. Take hold of arms and shield; and rise up to help me. Bring out the sword and shut up the way against them that persecute me: say to my soul: I am thy salvation." (5)

(1) Exod. xv. 3.
(2) Ps. lxxix. 5, 8, 20.
(3) Ps. lxvii. 13.
(4) Ps. xlvi. 3.
(5) Ps. xxxiv. 1-3.

And JESUS Christ, to signify how He will appear at the end of the world, shows Himself to St. John, under the figure of a knight in full armour, who has conquered all nations and all things, not, however, without having sustained many a most severe and bloody encounter:—"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and with justice doth He judge and fight. And His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many diadems, and He had a name written which no man knoweth but Himself. And He was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, and His name is called: The Word of God. And the armies that are in heaven followed Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen white and clean. And out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword, that with it He may strike the nations. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty. And He had on His garment, and on His thigh written: King of kings, and Lord of lords."(1)

713. However, it is not by a display of power that Christ's victory is to be won. Indeed, if it were a question of power, all combat would be impossible. For, Christ has power to annihilate His enemies when and how He wills, even before the fight; since it is He Himself Who gives them existence. He has power to disable them from perpetrating any hostile act against Him; since it is He Himself Who gives them at every instant whatever strength and life they have. He has power, in fine, as the First Cause of every good act,

(1) Apoc. xix. 11-16.

however voluntary and free, to bend their wills and make them all humble and submissive to Himself.

But God enters the lists armed, not so much with Power as with Infinite Wisdom, which is a faithful guide to His Infinite Goodness. And this Wisdom it is which so to speak, curbs His Power, and forbids its being employed without necessity, nay, which gives to the problem that condition of special difficulty which we have mentioned, namely, "That all the good which created nature can produce should be obtained from the creature itself, brought to its full realization, and that beyond what is necessary for this full realization, no power should be employed except in such a way as to ensure its producing the very greatest fruit possible."

714. It was on this account that God, knowing for certain the effect which would follow from His supremely wise dispositions, said to His people: "Such and such a King, such and such a law, I give, or I do not give into your hands." He had no need for that purpose of any extraordinary or miraculous effort of His Power; He simply made use of His Wisdom, which had so predisposed the course of natural things, that His people would surely gain the victory, or else suffer defeat. (1)

(1) This is how God spoke to Moses when the time which He had appointed for the conquest of Palestine was near at hand: "Thou shalt pass this day the borders of Moab, the city named Ar. And when thou comest nigh the frontiers of the children of Ammon, take heed thou fight not against them, nor once move to battle; for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon, because I have given it to the children of Lot for a possession." And here Moses notes that the land of the Ammonites was formerly inhabited by a race of giants, and that "the Lord destroyed them before the face of the Ammonites, and He made these to dwell there in their stead; as He had done in favour of the children of Esau, that dwell

Hence this disposal of second causes in view of the certain fulfilment of His designs is clearly referred to by God Himself, as for instance where He says: "This day will I begin to send the dread and fear of thee upon the nations that dwell under the whole heaven, that when they hear thy name they may fear and tremble, and be in pain like women in travail." (1)

Afterwards Moses relates how the war against King Sehon was waged under a title of equity and justice, that is to say, his having refused to allow the People of Israel to pass through his territory, notwithstanding the promise that no damage whatever should be inflicted upon him, a promise which they had faithfully kept with the children of Esau and the Moabites, who had given the permission. "But," Moses writes, "Sehon, the King of Hesebon, would not let us pass; because the Lord thy God had hardened his spirit, and fixed his heart, that he might be delivered into thy hands, as now thou seest." (2)

715. Now, if God had willed to bring about those events by means of Power alone, there would have been no need, either of the enemies of His people being struck with fear, which is an effect according to nature, or of the King of Hesebon showing obstinacy in refusing to let the people pass through, which might also have been a natural and free disposition. But God,

in Seir, destroying the Horrites, and delivering their land to them." Then the Almighty continues: "Arise ye and pass the torrent Arnon: behold I have delivered into thy hand Sehon, King of Hesebon the Amorrhite, and begin thou to possess his land, and make war against him."—Deuteron. ii. 18-24.

(1) *Ibid.* ii. 25. (2) *Ibid.* ii. 30.

Who orders second causes with Infinite Wisdom, had so disposed them as to bring about at the proper time that panic, and that stubbornness of will, which were to result in the just victory of Israel, and through that victory destroy those races which, by reason of their moral corruption, had ceased to contribute to the universal good which God intends to draw from His creatures.

Wherefore, when the servants of God, both in the old and in the new Covenant, give to Him the title of "Lord of Hosts;" (1) or when they say that "He was fighting for Israel," (2) their meaning is, not that God wrought miracles at every turn, but that He secured the victory to Israel through those secondary causes which were in His hands from the beginning, and the series of which He had ordained in such a manner as would infallibly lead to the accomplishment of His will. Thus were all the effects of secondary causes ascribed to Him as First Cause, and all the glory thereof rendered to Him alone.

716. But, for the greater elucidation of the *Law of Antagonism*, we will inquire what is the reason of the opposition and hostility which as a matter of fact manifests itself in creation. That reason must be sought in the very essence of contingent being.

Contingent being is real, but by means of intuition participates of ideal being. Now, contingent real being is finite, but ideal being is infinite. The antagonism, therefore, lies in the conflict between the finite and the infinite. I have already touched on this

(1) 1 Kings i. 3, *et passim.* (2) Deuteron. iii. 22, *et passim.*

important truth; I will now endeavour to place it in a clearer light.

717. Real being has three acts: the act that belongs to it as real, and two additional acts, the one intellective and the other volitive, suscitated by the communication of ideal being.

Real being, considered in its own proper act alone—I mean contingent real being as it presents itself to our perception—is of three kinds: 1st, extension or space; 2nd, corporeal matter; 3rd, feeling.

718. Extension, or space, presents itself as immutable, and therefore incapable of antagonism.

719. As regards corporeal matter, this seems indifferent to every state, whether of union or of separation, because it has not in itself the reason of its motion; (1) so that to conceive the state of union as natural to matter, *i. e.*, to conceive it as having a continual tendency to remain all united, is to add to it something which, properly speaking, belongs not to it, but to feeling, in which we manifestly see a cause of the motion of matter.

Nor would it be a valid objection to say that by conceiving of matter in this way, that is, by despoiling it of its forces, we annihilate it; because to save the existence of matter it is enough that it may exist by the aid of other forces not belonging to itself, such as those of corporeal feeling. The only consequence, a consequence neither absurd nor improbable, which

(1) St. Thomas teaches that in regard to local motion, bodies are subject to Angelic intelligences; *Natura corporalis obedit eis (Angelis) ad motum localem* (S. p. i., q. cxi., art. 3). He proves this by an argument taken from a sentence of St. Augustine.—*Tr.*

would follow from the mode of conceiving just indicated, is. that matter, by itself alone, is not a complete substance, and, that in order to subsist, it must have some other principle conjoined with it. Therefore in mere matter so conceived, no true antagonism can be discovered.

720. The antagonism begins to manifest itself in the animal sensitive principle; for that principle truly tends to individuate itself and construct for itself an organism by assuming that form and configuration which is most convenient and pleasurable to it. Hence a strife between it and matter, or rather, between the divers individualities into which feeling gathers itself wherever it finds a chance, and each of which tends to constitute itself in as perfect a mode as it can, by attracting matter to itself, and absorbing other feelings into itself. From this continual activity of feeling there arise the movements of the world, the mutual clashing of the various forms, their breaking up and their renewal, a universal labour in all nature, travailing in the processes of organizing and disorganizing.

721. Here, indeed, there appears to be a necessary strife; and I am not sure that, unless an extraneous force, namely, the intellective, intervened, the strife could ever cease until nature reached a state, in which, all the animal feeling organized into perfect unity and individuality, formed of all corporeal matter but one huge animal. However, even if we were to admit the possibility of that state of rest being ultimately arrived at, it would still be certain that the animal feeling is not ordained merely for that purpose;

because this feeling does not stand alone, and has not an end in itself, but must serve intelligences, which are many and manifold.

722. This is why the antagonism which is seen to occur even in the order of animality does not terminate in it, nor has its reason there, but in the intelligences for which it is ordained. The multitude of these intelligences destined, like man's, to make use of a corporeal feeling, renders a large multiplication of the individuations of this feeling unavoidable; and from the moment that feeling is obliged to constitute itself into many individual animals, it is *ipso facto* broken up and found necessarily in a state of combat and strife within itself.

Thus is Divine Wisdom fully vindicated in regard to the conflict between the various individual sentient principles, and to all that naturally follows from it in the material world. It only remains, therefore, to speak of the conflict which manifests itself in the order of intelligences, whereof that seen in the animal order is a condition and an instrument.

723. With regard to this class of beings the observation made above holds perfectly good, that the antagonism from which God derives so much glory is a strife of the finite with the infinite. I will endeavour to throw more light upon this truth.

Man is a finite real being endowed with the intuition of the essence of being, which has no bounds. By means of this intuition man is fitted to know every being, in such wise, however, that he has the power to will and love, or not to will and love, the beings which he knows. It is this faculty that enables him to act

morally; for moral good consists "in willing and loving the essence of being, and therefore the *whole of being* without any exclusion whatever." Now, if the nature of moral good requires that the whole of being should be willed and loved, it manifestly requires also that each particular being should be loved in proportion to the degree in which it partakes of the essence of being.

This proportionate distribution of our appreciation and love constitutes the sum of our moral duties; and the more we maintain and love it, the more perfect we are. But to maintain this just proportion not unfrequently costs labour and suffering. Hence strife and sacrifice. And as the moral perfection and merit increases in proportion to the effort and labour it costs, it is obvious that man cannot be conceived as having attained to the very summit of perfection, save on condition of his having been engaged in a conflict, nay, in the most fierce and terrible conflict that can be imagined.

724. But why should there be labour and suffering in distributing our appreciation and love in proportion as the various beings participate more or less in the essence of being?

The reason lies, not in the nature of morality, but in our own limitation.

We are finite, and the object of morality is infinite (the essence of being). We have, therefore, continually to strive hard to overcome our limitation by reaching out to the infinite. Now, this effort of a finite being to measure itself with the infinite, is extremely irksome; because it entails, as it were, a disruption of itself, breaking down in a certain way the limits within which

created beings are inclosed. And since these limits are natural to it, the result is that it loves them, and is naturally loth to pass beyond them, from a feeling that by thus allowing itself to fall into, and be absorbed by, the infinite, its individuality would be lost, and in a manner annihilated. Hence the moral grandeur of the act of Christian HUMILITY, or the continual annihilation of oneself before the Infinite Being.

Indian Philosophy abused this great truth, by exchanging *moral* and voluntary *annihilation* with *real annihilation*, and considering the absorption of created beings into God, with the loss of their own individuality, as the highest perfection and happiness.(1) Monstrous as this error may appear, it is none the less a truth in disguise: it is a testimony of approbation which those ancient sages, although mistaken, involuntarily gave to Christian teaching regarding the self-humiliation of the creature before the Creator.

725. This appears all the more manifest, if we consider that man, by nature, acts with the practical understanding, that is to say, with a will that assents and adheres to the beings which the understanding represents to it; and the will, as we have said, is good and perfect, when it adheres to those beings in proportion to the degrees of their respective entities.

It follows, then, that man's actions also, to be morally

(1) "Thus the man who recognizes in his own soul the supreme soul which is present in all creatures, shows himself ever the same to all, and obtains the happiest lot, that of being at last absorbed into Brahma" (Manava-Dharma Sastra, XII., 125). The doctrine of the *Absorption* of reality into the Supreme Being flows as a consequence from that of *Emanation*.

good, must proceed from that adhesion of the will and accord with it. But man does not know all beings in the same way, although he knows the entitative essences of all. Some he knows as actually present and felt by him. The others which were formerly so perceived, and are now at a distance from him, he knows either by imagination or by simple recollection. Others, of which he has had no perception either present or past, he knows purely by intuition, as is the case with regard to the essence of being (ideal knowledge); or else by reasoning, he infers their existence as determined by certain relations and nothing more (inductive-ideal-negative knowledge).

Now, we have seen that if all the beings which man has to will and love were known by him in the same mode, he would find it easy to apportion his love and his action precisely to the degree of entity which they possess, as the law of morality demands. But since, as a matter of fact, man is more moved by some beings than by others, not because of their greater entity, which constitutes the *moral principle*, but because of the different manner in which he knows them, it becomes necessary for him—if he wishes to act toward them conformably to their degree of entity—to counteract by vigorous effort that stronger motion which they produce in him. Hence the strife. I will show this by examples.

The human essence is the same in all men; therefore each man owes to every one of his fellow-men a respect and a love of the same species as that which he has for himself. Such is the rule which ought to guide his conduct. But he knows himself by an intimate and

essential feeling, whereas he knows others only by perception, or by imagination. Now, the mode in which he knows himself is of a kind that moves him to act much more in favour of himself than in favour of others. Hence he is often tempted, in opposition to the principle of morality, to prefer himself unduly to others, by loving himself as an end, and others only as a means; which is a love of a different species. To be virtuous, therefore, he will have to struggle against that temptation and overcome it.

The moral law, which enjoins love for all beings, tells us, *first*, that we must not do them any injury, because that is abhorrent to the nature of love; *secondly*, that we must do good to them in proportion to the love which we bear them, a love which must be proportionate to the entities respectively belonging to them. These two precepts, the one negative and the other positive, embrace the whole of morality.

To begin with the first (duty of justice), let us see how it is often impossible, owing to our limitation, to practise it without a struggle.

I am, for instance, suffering from hunger, or I find myself exposed to serious danger, say that of death; and at the same time I have it in my power to get rid of that pain by directly causing it to another, for example, by stealing from him the food necessary for his sustenance, or to escape from that danger by killing an innocent person. If I wish to keep free from guilt, I must endure the pangs of hunger, I must even submit to death. Certainly I am not obliged to do myself an injury, indeed I am obliged not to injure anyone, whether it be myself or others; but for this very reason,

when an evil befalls me, and I cannot avoid it without myself wronging another, I am bound to suffer it in peace; because the moral law is universal, and it says to all alike: "Do no wrong."

This struggle which virtue has often to sustain is manifestly due to human LIMITATION. I perceive myself more vividly than I do other beings, because my reality is limited to myself, whereas the law of morality demands that I should direct my action to respect and love *every being according to the essence belonging to it*, quite irrespectively of the mode in which I know it.

Let us pass to the positive precept, that which bids us do good, and which becomes obligatory whenever by *doing good* is meant the endeavour to remove evil from intelligent beings (duties of charity).

My country is in danger of a hostile invasion; and I cannot defend it, save at the risk of my life. If I love things in proportion to their respective entities, I must prefer my country to my life. But my reality, because limited, shrinks from the fulfilment of so hard a duty. If the reality of all my fellow-countrymen were my reality, I should have the complex instinct of the whole, and should find no difficulty in sacrificing a portion of that whole, namely, myself, for the preservation of the greater portion, that of my fellow-countrymen; nay, instinct itself would infallibly lead me to do so. Being, however, impressed by the feeling and instinct of my individual reality alone, I naturally draw back from the requirements of the moral law which has no regard for this limitation, but says absolutely: "Prefer with thy esteem, thy love, and thy action, the greater to the lesser entity, sacrifice thyself for thy country." This,

then, is a hard law, and again exacts a struggle and a sacrifice.

726. This moral conflict, we have said, is always a conflict between the finite and the infinite. It is so even when the greater entity which I must prefer to my own reality is finite, as in the case of my being called upon to give my life for my country. For the law which says: "Prefer the greater to the lesser entity," is nothing but a consequence of the antecedent law: "Recognize the essence of being," which essence is infinite. In the respect due to this infinite essence, therefore, lies the ultimate ground of every moral law, of every moral obligation. In it lies the essence of morality, although this infinite essence be respected in a real being which partakes of it in a finite manner.

727. That the moral conflict is between the finite and the infinite, appears with still greater evidence if the immediate object of the moral duty is the essence itself of being, either ideal or realized.

728. Truthfulness and fidelity to promises are duties the immediate object of which is the essence of being contemplated in the fundamental idea; and sometimes these duties can only be fulfilled at the cost of life.

729. The essence of being fully realized is God. In man's duties towards God, therefore, there is question of that Subsistent Being Whose very Reality admits of no limit. Hence the respect due to this Being cannot bear any comparison with the respect which man owes to his own reality, which, relatively to the Divine Reality, is *nil*. Hence the obligation of giving honour

to God and obeying His will always and at all costs, at the cost of all sufferings, of death itself. If man fails in so manifest a duty, he loses his personal perfection, and renders himself morally perverse.

Again, then, the LIMITATION of the reality which constitutes man is necessarily an occasion of moral conflict, of that conflict wherein man is obliged to break through the bounds of his own nature in order to reach out into the infinite which is communicated to his intelligence, and by this means to be made partaker of the infinite good, for moral good always is infinite by its very essence.

730. It is needless to say, that the perfection here spoken of is greater in proportion to the greater intensity of the effort which man makes in acquiring it. Consequently, man could not have attained to the summit of moral good otherwise than through antagonism. But the Goodness of God, because infinite, tends to obtain from His creatures ALL the moral good which they can yield to Him. It therefore behoved the Wisdom and Goodness of God so to ordain created things that in them and through them there might be developed the GREATEST ANTAGONISM POSSIBLE, as an indispensable means for their GREATEST POSSIBLE MORAL PERFECTION.

731. Accordingly, it was requisite that all should conspire against the virtue of the creature, and that the virtue of the creature should triumph over all: the infinite in the creature must vanquish ALL THE FINITE. Such is the triumph of the Wisdom and Goodness of the Creator, such THE GLORY OF GOD.

732. Now, in order that this antagonism might be

the very fiercest possible, it was requisite that the opposition between the contending sides should likewise be the greatest possible ; and this it could not be if the conflict raged merely between individuals. It was, therefore, fitting that there should be an organized opposition ; many things, many persons must be leagued together in the fight against virtue.

733. On the other hand, virtue and moral good belong to the individual ; and as the creature itself required a force able to repel the opposition organized against it, so virtue also needed an organized plan of defence : many things and many persons must combine together in its support.

734. Hence the *two societies* existing on earth, the one composed of those whom Holy Scripture designates as the " children of God," the other of those whom it calls the " children of men." Two cities ; the city of God and the city of the devil. They appeared distinct and at enmity as soon as mankind began to multiply, and they will be engaged in mortal combat to the end of time. It was this death-struggle between them that afforded so sublime a theme to the Eagle of Hippo, in his immortal work, *De Civitate Dei.*

735. In Holy Scripture all kings and all nations are described as banded together to oppose God's Anointed One. Thus for example we read : " Why have the gentiles raged, and the peoples devised vain things ? The kings of the earth have stood up, and the princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ (saying) : Let us break their bonds asunder, and let us cast away their yoke from us." (1)

(1) Ps. ii. 1-3.

And the same Holy Scripture describes all kings and all nations as coming over to the side of Christ: "And all the kings of the earth shall adore Him: all nations shall serve Him." (1)

All kings, then, and all nations belong to the city of the devil, and all kings and all nations belong to the city of God; what antagonism! what a conflict! It therefore seems to me, probable that in all royal families God will suffer powerful enemies to rise up against His Kingdom, and that He will permit all nations to be inundated for a time with corruption and impiety, that so everything may conspire against the good cause. But we must also suppose that in all royal families there will be faithful servants of God, and that all nations will have periods of virtue and piety, that so everything may be in favour of the good cause. (2) Thus will good triumph over evil in the end and gain a most splendid and unlooked-for victory.

736. In truth, it is written that God will laugh His enemies to scorn, and will bring all nations to naught, (3) by humbling their pride and their impiety when they seem surest of victory. And again, in foretelling the universal dominion of JESUS CHRIST, it is said: "He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them (at the conspiracy of princes and of peoples), and the Lord

(1) Ps. lxxi. 11.

(2) Thus we see that Holy Scripture, according to the remark of St. Augustine, speaks sometimes of the part as if it were the whole.—Epist. cxlix. 20.

(3) "But Thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; THOU SHALT BRING ALL THE NATIONS TO NOTHING."—Ps. lviii. 9.

shall deride them. Then shall He speak to them in His anger, and trouble them in His rage. But I am appointed King by Him over Sion, His holy mountain, preaching His commandment. The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. And now, O ye kings, understand; receive instruction, you that judge the earth. Serve ye the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling. Embrace discipline, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and you perish from the just way." (1) God says that He will bring the nations to naught, but in order to renovate them; He will rule them and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel, but to change them into vessels of honour that shall stand as ornaments around His Throne. And so we see the most famous idolatrous kingdoms fallen, the ancient nations melted away, and the world daily renovated by the Gospel, which alone satisfies the aspirations of the human heart. For this reason is the Redeemer called "the hope of all the ends of the earth, and in the sea afar off." (2)

737. We should consider here a fresh reason of the necessity of this relentless antagonism to the end that Divine Wisdom might draw from creatures all the good possible. From the victory which the principle of good (the infinite) obtains over the principle of evil (limita-

(1) Ps. ii. 4-12. (2) Ps lxiv. 6.

tion), there springs up in those creatures which are the fortunate objects of this victory, a sentiment of boundless and jubilant gratitude to that Sovereign Lord, to Whose wisdom and goodness alone the victory is due. In fact, the knowledge that they have been brought back from iniquity to righteousness, and have received instead of the punishment they had deserved an unmerited and exceeding great reward, cannot but foster within them feelings of infinite joy and gratitude. Their highest happiness consists not merely in the enjoyment of the good which is now theirs, but in the delight moreover which they experience in contrasting this present good with the evil in which they once were, and the recollection and the sight of which enable them fully to understand and appreciate the greatness of the grace they have received. This grace they see to have been freely bestowed upon them by God Who has exerted in their favour all the wisdom and power displayed by Him in the government of the universe; for all of it was necessary for the salvation of each.

This jubilant gratitude furnishes an inexhaustible theme for those canticles which Holy Scripture itself puts in the mouth of the just, as expressing their innermost sentiments. For, they say within themselves: "He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor retributed to us according to our iniquities. For according to the height of the heaven above the earth," (the very extremes) "He hath strengthened His mercy towards them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us. As a father hath compassion

on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him." (1) Such, and other similar affectionate outpourings of praise which often occur in Holy Writ, and which are of infinite moral value to those who utter them, could only come from souls that have a clear knowledge, gained by bitter experience, of the misery from which man is raised up by the benignity of His Creator. And since this passage from evil to good, through which all the just are gathered together, causes so vivid a knowledge of the goodness of God, and so thrilling a delight, we read that Mount Sion, the City of the Great King, is founded on the exultation and joy of all the earth. (2)

738. If we examine more closely the inmost nature of this terrible conflict, of this extreme antagonism between the infinite and the finite, we shall feel still more how great is the goodness of God to men.

On the one hand there is the contingent, which is a limited reality. This limited reality consists of a limited substantial feeling, possessed of limited instincts and of limited principles of action, all of them tending to such limited good as a limited reality can receive.

On the other hand, there is the moral law, which is unlimited; there is, namely, the essence of being naturally manifest to the human intellect, and there is the Infinite Real Being, God.

Now, that a limited nature should tend to the good peculiar to it, is not a disorder, but a law of nature. But that it should, in its esteem and love, prefer its

(1) Ps. cii. 10-13. (2) Ps. xlvii. 3.

limited self to the unlimited being which is made known to it, this is disorder, injustice, an outrage against the infinite.

This kind of collision between the finite and the infinite, is not in itself necessary; for we can very well conceive the possibility of harmony and peace between the finite, namely, created nature, and the infinite which is manifested to it.

God, however, preferred a different course, because it accorded better with His Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. He disposed, therefore, an order of things in which virtue should vanquish the strongest temptations; that so the infinite might ultimately be triumphant over all the finite, and the Creator receive the greatest glory from His work.

To this end it was necessary to permit sin:—

1st. Because, without sin, the creature could not have been developed in all the states of which it was susceptible; for, in the eternal idea there was virtually contained, not only its *limitation*, not only its *deficiency*, but also its *fall*, with all the grades by which it unhappily descends;

2ndly. Because, as sin leaves in the intelligent creature a state of malice and disorder, and consequently of moral impotence, the struggle of fallen nature with vice became most difficult, indeed so difficult as to render it quite impossible for nature, by its own powers alone, to gain the victory. This was, therefore, really a case in which, to save the creature, an extraordinary aid from God was called for: and His intervention had a sufficient reason, inasmuch as, without it, the creature could no longer

yield that *maximum* of fruit for which it had been brought into existence.

739. On the other hand, whilst the creature, assisted by so powerful an aid could yield its *maximum* of fruit, the whole glory of it belonged to God alone, Who in pure loving-kindness had freely stepped forward to help His fallen and disabled creature in this extraordinary way. Hence St. Bernard, in unison with all ecclesiastical tradition, writes as follows: "Thou wouldst have me tell thee where our merits are, or on what our hope is founded. Here is my answer: 'Not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.' (1) What? Didst thou peradventure believe thyself to be the creator of thy merits, and to be able to save thyself by thy own justice, thou who canst not say, 'The Lord JESUS, but by the Holy Ghost'? (2) Hast thou, then, forgotten Who it is that said: 'Without Me ye can do nothing'? (3) And, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy'?" (4) St. Augustine too extols the grace of the Redeemer above that which was first given to Adam, in this, that, by drawing good out of the fallen, it showed a wonderfully superior power. "Wherefore," he says, "these (the fallen men) require a mightier grace, although for the present time (the time of this life) it is not more joyful than the former grace was." (5) Human nature having fallen, it became necessary that the Eternal

(1) Tit. iii. 5. (2) 1. Cor. xii. 3. (3) Jo. xv. 3.

(4) Rom. ix. 16.—St. Bernard, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, n. 1.

(5) *Proinde, etsi non interim lætiore nunc, verumtamen* POTENTIORE GRATIA *indigent ipsi* (*L. De Corrept. et Gratia*, n. 30).

Word should put Himself at the head of the battle lost by man; and under such a captain the victory could no longer be doubtful.

But what I wish the reader particularly to observe here, is this, that although God Himself intervened in the conflict, He did not thereby destroy the hostile forces which sin had so greatly increased. On the contrary, He left them in their full vigour, wishing to vanquish them in a well contested fight; and this is why the conflict of which we are speaking became tremendous, and the antagonism the greatest possible. No, God would not gain the victory by annihilating the adverse forces, as He might have done, but only by succouring with a Divine power those who stood up for righteousness, that is to say, by wedding to losing humanity His Own Eternal Word, or the grace of the Word. (1)

As for the hostile forces, they must remain intact—the Devil and his princedom in the world (from which he will not be driven till after a just victory), the rebellion of the flesh, the inclination to evil, the disorder of nature no longer harmonizing with virtue, death, and all the other penal consequences of sin, which entail on man, even united with the Word, and assisted by the grace of the Word, the necessity of the keenest

(1) How the justification of men after the fall is not wrought by destroying anything in them, but by implanting a new and supernatural principle of action, elevated above all the principles of natural action, may be seen in the Author's Dissertation *On the Doctrine of Original Sin* ("Dottrina del Peccato Originale"), Quest. v. [It should be specially noted that, according to the Author, the supernatural principle of action implanted in man does not take away his free-will, so that he can still make an evil use of it, as experience tell us that he often does.—*Tr.*]

struggles. For, all this was necessary in order that the invincible power of Divine grace might be luminously shown. "And what more powerful grace" (says St. Augustine), (1) "than the Only Begotten Son of God, equal to, and co-eternal with, the Father, made Man for them (sinners), and without any sin, either original, or of His own doing, crucified by sinful men? Who, although He rose again the third day, to die no more, endured death for the sake of mortals; He Who gave life to the guilty, in order that, being redeemed by His Blood, and having been vouchsafed such and so great a pledge of love, they might say: 'If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things'?" (2)

740. Here it is necessary to reflect that, although all these victories proceed from God alone, nevertheless He fights in and with man; and for this reason it is in very deed man who, in the hands of God, effects so great a good. "Men," continues St. Augustine, "through this grace of the Saviour receive so much freedom, that although, while they remain in this life, they fight against the concupiscences of sins, and sometimes fall, on which account they say daily, 'forgive us our trespasses,' nevertheless they no longer serve that sin which is unto death." (3)

This new strength of free-will which redeemed sinners acquire from Christ, is displayed chiefly in the fiercer conflict which they have to sustain, and which

(1) As quoted above.

(2) Rom. viii. 31, 32. (3) As quoted.

makes their victory all the more glorious. For, as St. Augustine again says: "Beyond all doubt, against temptations so many and so grievous, which had no place in Eden, a greater liberty, upheld and fortified by the gift of perseverance, was required, in order that this world might be vanquished, with all its loves, its terrors, and its errors." (1) And he seems never to weary of extolling the valour and merit of sinners after Redemption, especially in the case of the Martyrs, over that of Adam in the state of innocence. Lastly he observes: "Without being threatened by anybody, on the contrary, using his free-will against the command of God, Who threatened him, Adam failed to maintain himself in so happy a state, easy as it was for him not to sin; whereas redeemed sinners, notwithstanding the threats and harsh treatment of the world to shake their constancy, remained faithful. Moreover, Adam beheld the goods before him which he was to forfeit, whereas they did not behold the future blessings which they were to receive. How came this about, if not by the mercy of Him from Whom they received the grace of remaining faithful, and a spirit, not of fear, that they should yield to their persecutors, but of valour, of charity, of continence, which rendered them superior to all threats, all entreaties, all torments? To him, then, who was free from all sin was given free-will with which he was created, and he made use of it unto sin; the will of the redeemed, on the contrary, being enslaved to sin, was freed by Him Who said: (2) 'If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.'" (3)

(1) *L. de Corrept. et Gratia*, n. 35.

(2) John viii. 36.

(3) Loc. cit. n. 25.

741. We must call to mind again—and this point can never be sufficiently insisted on—that man, fallen by sin and raised from an abyss to the eternal kingdom, by the very fact of his having been transferred from one extreme to the other, between which there is a measureless chaos, is feelingly persuaded of his own nothingness and of the greatness and bounty of his Creator. In this vivid appreciation of the greatness and bounty of God consists his own moral perfection; since, as above said, perfection is constituted by the *practical recognition of God.*

Man is a power; (1) and his perfection consists in action; and action is all the more worth, the *wider* is its *scope*, that is to say, the greater the distance is from its starting-point to the point at which it terminates, and to which it brings man. Consequently, the most wide-reaching moral action of which man can be the subject, is that which reaches from the extreme of moral evil to the extreme of good; and the farther-reaching and the more rapid this transference, the more intimately does he know and perceive the Goodness and Power of God, and his own perversity and impotence.

742. Furthermore, the moral act is of so much the greater value in proportion to its *intensity;* and it gains in intensity by spirited conflict. Man, as at first constituted, had no difficult conflict to engage in, since God could not be the author of evil, or the creator of any nature at variance with virtue; nay, it behoved

(1) See the Author's work, *Society and its Aim* ("La Società ed il suo Fine"), Bk. iv, ch. 6.

Him to dispose everything to the advantage and easier exercise of virtue. Opposition, therefore, could not arise except from that same free-will which made the created being capable of sin; and hence the Wisdom and Bounty of God permitted sin, that in consequence of it there might spring into existence that mighty conflict which would bring to the cause of virtue and God a yet mightier victory. This opposition was brought about by sin in the following manner. Justice demanded the punishment of prevarication. After the transgression of the creature, therefore, God allowed the harmony established by Him between real, intellectual, and moral being to be destroyed; He suffered being under these three forms to clash in a most dreadful manner, and the creature, by becoming a burden and a torment to itself, to punish its own voluntary rebellion. Wherefore, the penal consequences of sin best suited to Divine Justice and ordered by a most wise Providence to the furtherance of the good cause, were those which engendered that contest of nature with itself, which made St. Paul very properly liken it to a woman groaning in labour. Most suitable is this similitude, showing as it does in a forcible way that the anguish experienced by all nature is not intended to terminate in woe at last, but is directed by God to the obtaining of good, even as child-birth accompanied by such bitter pangs is afterwards followed by joy for the birth of a son. These are the Apostle's words: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who made it subject, in hope; because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of

ST. ALBERTUS COLLEGE LIBRARY

corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and travaileth in pain even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body." (1)

Here the Apostle, after describing the conflict which we behold in disordered nature, goes on to point out that this strife continues even in those who are redeemed and justified by Christ, because there remain in them likewise the consequences of sin whence the struggle proceeds, namely, the corruption of the body, the natural will of the flesh which lusts against the spirit, that is to say, against that supernatural principle which is the apex of the human spirit, the personality placed in a state of salvation, the new man, the new creature, whose business it is to combat and vanquish the old man.

743. This supernatural will and activity, called into existence in man by the grace and virtue of Christ, is by Him pitted against corrupt and disharmonized nature. If Christ Himself had not created in man this new active principle, the contest would have been at an end, because human power would have been conquered and extinguished, man lost, a prisoner, dead for evermore. Thus sprang up two redoubtable adversaries which wage fierce and unrelenting war with each other: nature, by its own free perversion of itself, permitted

(1) Rom. viii. 20, 23.

by Almighty God, first acted as the power for evil, and God produced the power for good, to wit, the Incarnate Word and the grace of the Word, spread abroad in the hearts of men, and forming in them an invisible power able to maintain the conflict with unfailing success. In this way was an extreme antagonism made possible, and the most glorious of victories secured. (1)

744. On attentive consideration it will appear manifest that this vast plan of Divine Providence was the only one that fully accorded with Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, which aims at deriving from the creature all moral good possible, and therefore at raising this creature to the summit of moral perfection by the least means available. For, as the reader is already aware, the highest moral perfection, which is ever attended by the greatest happiness, consists essentially in the greatest practical knowledge of God as good; and God's Goodness is known only by His action, and His action by experiencing it. In order, therefore, that intelligent creatures might be furnished with the most perfect knowledge of God, and so be moved to love Him, and to work out their own sanctification and perfection, it was fitting that they should be made to experience the supreme act of Divine Goodness, and so led to place all their hopes and love in Him as in their only good; it was fitting,

(1) The Author has pointed out, in the work entitled *Society and its Aim* ("La Società ed il suo Fine"), (Bk. iv., ch. 22, 23), how Christian nations withstand the most severe trials without being contaminated.

consequently, that they should be enabled to compare the good freely bestowed by God with the good contained in themselves or in the contingent universe.

Now, this comparison would be made most advantageously by carrying out the plan above described, in which man is made sensible of all the deficiency and nothingness of his own nature, rendered unfruitful and degraded, or rather, rearing itself up in rebellion and chafing against moral good and human perfection. Nevertheless, whilst he can discover no ray of hope either in himself or in the rest of creation, whilst he feels that he is an enemy to himself, and that all beings, whether they persecute or whether they flatter him, are obstacles to his virtue; he beholds God coming forward to meet him, and as a still loving Father addressing him: "Lo, I am thy salvation." True it is that man, as long as he lay prostrate in evil, was not even awake to his real condition; being the more profoundly buried in slumber, the more he allowed himself to be inveigled by his enemies, and to put his trust in them. But no sooner was he aroused and brought forth from such an abyss of death, than he plucked up courage to recognize his former desperate condition, and the happy state that had succeeded to it. It is on this account that those fortunate souls which undergo so desirable a change, still bearing the traces of woes and exulting over the advantages which have been gratuitously bestowed upon them, are filled with unspeakable admiration for God's Goodness, and feel themselves constrained to fling away all inordinate love for finite

things, which had caused them irreparable ruin, and to transfer their affection to their Creator and Saviour, to whom they are indebted for so stupendous a deliverance from evil, and for such an abundance of blessings.

God the only Saviour of the creature: this was the wonderful conception to be revealed to intelligent creatures by way of experience, and this was alone to afford scope to the greatest love, the most sublime perfection, the most perfect canticle of glory, to the Supreme Being.

745. Finite beings, then, in consequence of sin permitted by Almighty God, became the adversaries of good and the allies of evil; the Infinite Being, God, was the only power that remained to fight in the cause of good. Thus the words of Isaias received their perfect accomplishment: "The Lord ALONE shall be exalted." (1) But this exaltation of God alone was for the benefit of His lost creature, and God employed His power for good to the advantage of man, by uniting Himself to man in the Incarnation. Hence, Christ was the hero destined to fight the great fight; He was the only one who could claim to have "trodden the winepress alone," and to have had not a man of the Gentiles with Him. (2)

746. What, then, did human nature contribute to its own salvation? Before it was redeemed and saved by God, nothing more than this, itself, as the object to be saved. A passage of St. Bernard concerning free-will is

(1) Is. ii. 11. (2) *Ibid.* lxiii. 3.

to our purpose. "How stands the matter, thou sayest, with regard to free-will? I answer briefly: it is saved. Take away free-will, and there remains nothing to be saved: take away grace, and there remains nothing that can save. This work cannot be accomplished without two things; the one by which it is performed, the other for which, or in which, it is performed. God is the Author of salvation, free-will is but capable of being saved. God alone can grant salvation, free-will can only receive it. What, therefore, proceeds from God alone, and is conferred on free-will alone, cannot exist without the consent of the receiver, just as it cannot exist without the grace of the giver. Thus, free-will is said to co-operate with operating grace by giving its consent, that is to say, by being saved. For, to consent is to be saved." (1) By free-will is here to be understood man's will, free to perform some natural good, but incapable by itself of attaining to everlasting life, so that it is saved by God when by Christ it is made capable thereof.

747. But it will be worth our while to consider one at a time the two mighty combatants, the two powers which are embattled on this field of the world, as long as the world lasts,—the power of good and the power of evil.

The power of evil, as we saw, was constituted by the whole of finite creation, which fell from the first order of things in which it had been established by the Creator. The finite being which admits of moral evil

(1) *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, n. 2.

is that endowed with intellect and will; and two kinds are known to us, angels and men. That the opposition to good might be the most violent possible, God allowed that both should sin.

748. The prevaricating angels were forthwith changed into demons, and we may well believe that, in conformity with the law of variety, as many of them fell as there are degrees of evil of which the angelic nature is capable; and that there remained faithful as many as are the degrees of goodness to which their nature can attain. The power of evil, therefore, came into existence with the demons.

749. Moreover the devil later on seduced man, thereby gaining a first victory, and corrupting man's nature in such a way that the flaw was to be propagated to all the individuals of the human race, excepting solely the predestined Redeemer; (1) mankind differing in this respect from the angels, that a large part of these remained unfallen. Henceforward, human nature became the object of the most fearful war between God and the devil. Humanity which Satan sought to gain over to his side, thereby to recruit the powers of evil, was to be saved by God, and after having lent itself as the battle-field, if I may so say, of the belligerents, was to form the trophy of God's victory. Man's nature occupied in the scale of intelligent creatures the lowest place, being feeble, mortal, obliged to derive the elementary matter of its cognition from bodies, and God from all eternity had decreed to elevate

(1) Even the Mother of the Redeemer was *obnoxia peccato*, but was preserved from the stain of original sin in virtue of the grace of Christ.

it by His all-powerful goodness and grace above all the nobler creatures, above angelic intelligences, nay, even to set it on God's own throne and make it the object of the adoration of the whole universe.

All the most exalted creatures were, according to this Divine plan, to bow down before human nature and pay it adoration. Now, it would appear that, even before this grand design was carried into execution, God revealed it to the angelic intelligences, concealing from them, however, the manner in which it was to be brought about; on which account in Holy Writ it is styled "the mystery which hath been hidden from ages." (1) Such was the device to which the Wisdom of God would seem to have had recourse in order to raise the angels to the highest pitch of moral perfection, and consequently to the summit of felicity. For, the angels, by having revealed to them so recondite a mystery of His counsel before it was realized, were given the opportunity of raising themselves to the most intimate knowledge of God, and of themselves, and of making the most perfect act of appreciation, love, confidence, and faith in their Creator. Indeed, by reposing implicit faith in the word of God, inexplicable though it was to their minds, and by adhering with all their heart to His Supreme Will, they acknowledged that the Infinite is all, and the finite when compared with it, nothing; in other words, they saw not only that the existence of the finite depends on the Infinite, but that all exaltation and happiness of the finite, far from being the outcome of its own powers, depend, instead,

(1) Colos. i. 26.

solely on the free-will and power of the Infinite. Thus they understood how necessary it is that the finite should not place confidence in itself, but exclusively in its Creator, Whom all the forces of the finite cannot prevent from controlling them according to His own good pleasure, since He it is Who gives them existence.

The angelic intelligences, being illumined with the knowledge of so profound a truth, were in a position to honour and glorify God by voluntarily embracing that truth, by subjecting themselves to His Will, and avowing themselves ready with blind and unfaltering faith in God's word to humble themselves, as they were so exalted by nature, beneath that Human Being, comparatively so mean, yet foreknown from eternity as assumed to the fellowship of God Himself and seated on the right hand of the Father. Only by such a voluntary abasement of finite creatures before the Infinite Creator was the greatest glory of God, and at the same time the greatest moral perfection of the angelic creation, to be obtained.

750. Now, some of the angels suffered themselves to be held back by the instinct of their finite reality, and for its sake refused to satisfy the moral exigency of Infinite Being, which demanded that self-abasement from which their own perfection and the protection and favour of the Almighty would have accrued. By this refusal they fell. Others, on the contrary, willingly humbled their own finite reality beneath the decree of the Infinite, and as if annihilating themselves before Him, did what was their bounden duty. Their Maker, to reward their steadfastness, took them to Himself, and made them eternally happy in the

beatific vision. By their act of humiliation they gained a most clear practical knowledge of the greatness and beauty of God, who in that very instant gave Himself to them to be known and enjoyed by them for all eternity.

751. God made use of a certain Human Being, and of a certain system of human affairs to serve as a kind of sign by which to reveal to the angels His Divine attributes, (1) His Wisdom, Goodness and

(1) With regard to the angelic nature the same line of argument holds good which we pursued when speaking of man. It was then demonstrated that man could not have been taught to understand the Wisdom and Goodness of God, had not this Wisdom and Goodness been manifested in creation, which is a combination of signs from which may be inferred the Supreme Goodness and Wisdom of the creative act. Man as long as he remains in this life puts together these signs, and ascends by means of them to the conception of the Essential Wisdom and Goodness of the Creator. But when he is admitted to behold the Creator Himself, then he perceives the creative act, which is the Divine Essence, and contemplates in it without any medium the Creative Wisdom of God. Thus the knowledge of God which the blessed have is the complement of that which may be had by *viatores* (*i.e.*, by men whilst still wayfarers on earth). Now, the same, if I mistake not, is to be said of the angels' knowledge ; with this difference, however, that while men on earth get their knowledge of corporeal things by means of passive sensations, produced in them by the action of bodies, angels, on the other hand, have knowledge of bodies by means of the active sensations produced by them in the bodies themselves. In this manner bodies may be *signs* of cognitions of a high order to both men and angels, and means of communication between them. And as the *sensations* and *images* are (to use a Scholastic Latin term) the *species*, whereby men come to the knowledge of bodies : so the *active sensations* are the *species*, if they may be so called, proper to angels. According to the opinion which I incline to, these *active sensations* are implanted in the angelic nature and created with it, in a way similar to that in which the *fundamental sentiment*, by which man feels his own body, is innate, that is to say, implanted in human nature and created along with it. It is in this way that I explain the

Power. This revelation was to them the occasion of a free choice, either of perdition or of salvation, accordingly as they acknowledged or declined to acknowledge

knowledge angels have *per species innatas*, by which, as St. Thomas says, *cognoscunt res in propria natura* (S. p. 1., q. lviii., art. 7). This granted, there is no reason why we should not distinguish in the creation of the angels (as to logical order, though not as to time) the creation of their subjective reality—which may be signified by the word *cælum* in the first verse of Genesis, *In principio creavit Deus cælum et terram* (that is to say, the heavenly, or angelic nature, and the earthly, or human nature), —from the communication of the intellectual light, in other words, of the object which constitutes the form of the angelic intelligence. This communication would correspond to the first day of creation, of which it is said: "Be light made. And light was made" (v. 3); for St. Augustine, commenting on this passage, says: *Lux qua angelica mens formata est* (*De Gen.* ad litt. bk. iv., n. 50). Moreover, as the work of creation is divided into six days, so we may reasonably suppose that six activities, or active sentiments in other words, six *angelic perceptions*, took place. These would correspond to that knowledge which St. Augustine calls *vespertina*.

From all that has been said it is easy to see that the angels *non accipiunt cognitionem a rebus* (St. Thomas, S. p. 1., q. lviii., art. 7), since they are not, as men are, passive with respect to corporeal things, but have them for terms of their own activity. It does not follow from this that they are the creators of bodies, since God is the sole Creator of angels with all their activities, and of the term of these their natural activities, namely, bodies; as in like manner, it is God that creates the fundamental sentiment which belongs to man and space, although space is the term of that sentiment. As to the *cognitio matutina* of the angels, this is the knowledge by which they know things *secundum quod sunt in Verbo*, by which they see things in the creative act, in the Divine Essence; hence, it belongs to the angels in a state of beatitude, in which condition they are passive. St. Augustine thus expresses himself:—*Mens vero angelica* PURA CHARITATE INHÆRENS VERBO DEI, *postea quam illo ordine creata est ut præcederet cetera, prius ea vidit in Verbo Dei facienda quam facta sunt* (*De Gen.* ad. litt. bk. iv., n. 49). This reasoning is not inconsistent with what the same Doctor likewise affirms, that the angelic intelligence *illo ordine creata est ut præcedat cetera*, since he does not here speak of the order of time, but of a logical order, as may be gathered from what he adds afterwards (l. c. n. 51-55).

the greatness of God marked out and displayed to them in the creation of human nature. Now, that same Man, together with the system devised by God, afterwards formed the ground of conflict between the rebel angels and their Creator, whose design they strove to frustrate and annul by the use of those natural powers of theirs in which they had so rashly trusted when they sinned in the beginning.

752. Hence, in Scripture, God is frequently represented as taking mankind under the shelter of His wings, saving it from the enemy; and for thus saving man, amid so many perils, He is glorified and extolled. Such is the subject of the 92nd Psalm, among others, wherein occur certain ancient figures of speech peculiar to Holy Writ, which have become for us enigmatical. Thus, instead of saying *man* the Psalmist says *earth*, and instead of the *powers of hell* he says the *sea* and *floods*. We often meet in the Bible with this allegorical reference to the stormy ocean and to surging floods which threaten to swallow up the land, and to God, Who puts a stop to their encroachment, opposing an impassable barrier to the proud ocean, and defending the land against its incursions. The following poetical passage is as beautiful and sublime as it is brief:

"The Lord (Jehovah) hath reigned, He is clothed with beauty: the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded Himself. For He hath established the world (earth) which shall not be moved. Thy throne, (O God,) is prepared from of old: Thou art from everlasting.

"The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice.

"The floods have lifted up their waves, with the noise of many waters.

"Wonderful are the surges of the sea: more wonderful is the Lord on high. Thy testimonies are become exceedingly credible (trustworthy): holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days."

753. That the interpretation of this Psalm which I have just given is not arbitrary, may be gathered from the title prefixed to it in the Hebrew text, which says that this canticle of praise was for the day preceding the Sabbath, that is, for the sixth day of the week, the day on which man was formed. The world (earth), which is said to be established on that day, is no other than mankind, which God undertakes to defend with might against the enemies signified by the sea and the roaring floods; (1) for, in the day in which man was created, he had no other enemies to fear save the rebel angels. For this reason the throne which in the Psalm is said to be prepared even then for Jehovah, is the throne of theMan-God predestined in the eternal decree by which God made Him man, and the Divine testimonies which are said to be faithful, are no other than this decree, which was to have its most complete fulfilment in spite of all the formidable power of the demons. This interpretation receives confirmation and new light from the verse with which the Psalm concludes; for, mention is there made of God's house, the unfailing ornament of which must

(1) Henry Rosenmüller also entertains no doubt, at least about this fact, that by the sea and floods in this Psalm are not to be understood the sea and floods in a material sense, but hostile forces: *Significatur potentia impetusque horribilis hostium ut sæpe alias exercitus numerosi, omnia instar fluvii inundantis, fluminibus comparantur, velut Is. viii,* 7–8; *xvii,* 12 13; *Jer. xlvi,* 7–8. *Simili imagine,* he observes again, *ad adumbrandum irruentem Græcorum exercitum usus est Virgilius, Æneid. II,* 494, *seqq.* (Scholia in h. l.)

be holiness, unto the end of the world. Now, this house of God is mankind, wherein God chose to dwell by becoming man, and by communicating Himself to the faithful by means of faith. Wherefore He founded a chosen society of men, the Church, styled with propriety the temple, or house of God, whose characteristic mark is to be holy, in accordance with the aim God had in creating the world, and of which Solomon's temple was no more than a figure. (1)

754. God, however, had designed to defeat the devil, not by the use of His Power alone, but by opposing to him His Wisdom, an undeviating law of which is that of the *Least Means*. He accordingly gave the devil licence to do all that evil which was necessary in order that from created forces, from their most varied development, from their very limitations and shortcomings, there might result every possible kind of good. With this same intent God allowed Satan to tempt, seduce, and blight the stock from which the whole human race was to spring. But notwithstanding sin and the infection spread from it throughout the whole human race, He had reserved for Himself a Maid, free from all defilement of original sin, (2) from whose blood, without the intervention of man, was begotten a Man who should be at the same time God, the Man-God

(1) This is the theme, too, of Psalm xxiii.

(2) Since the distortion of the will that constitutes original sin arises from the corruption of the flesh, God, determining to raise an individual from its lowest depths to an untold degree of moral perfection, might have disposed even the natural causes of generation in such a way that at a given time this individual should be born untainted by that physical infection which is the immediate and efficient cause of the moral disorder. Nevertheless, this, too, was a most singular privilege, for that individual, as we have already seen, was *peccato obnoxia.*

Who was to bring plentiful redemption unto mankind, and in this way to overthrow and put to shame the devil.

Such a creation of the Divine Power and Wisdom was in a manner demanded by the *Law of Variety*, which required that even this form of human excellence should not be found wanting.

Moreover, it was in the Son of the Virgin that human nature reached the height of its greatness and majesty, for in Him it was indissolubly united to God by the very closest of bonds, that of personal union; and He by Himself was superabundantly able to redeem all other men from the bonds of the enemy, and to raise them from the abyss of sin to whatever degree it pleased Him of moral perfection. Thus it behoved Him to be a member of the human race, both on account of the *Law of the Least Means*, (1) and of that of *Excluded Equality*.

755. After this manner did that great Individual of the human species come among us, Who was to hold the chiefdom in the vast family of human beings, nay, the highest place in all creation, which, by the bond of personal union, was in Him linked to the Creator. Thus was realized not merely the *Archetype of humanity*, but the *deification of human nature*. Thus was man, a being inferior to all other intelligences, nay, even what was meanest in man, his very flesh, exalted to so sublime a dignity, as to deserve the adoration of all angelic minds: AND THE WORD WAS

(1) This is precisely the reason St. Thomas adduces: *Ad brevitatem viæ quam sapiens operator observat, pertinet quod non faciat per multa quod sufficienter potest fieri per unum. Et ideo convenientissimum fuit, quod per unum hominem omnes alii salvarentur* (S., p. III., q. iv., art. 5).

MADE FLESH. Thus was that primitive Divine decree fulfilled which had proved a stumbling-block to the rebel angels, and a source of moral perfection and of endless bliss to those that remained faithful. Thus the demons, who had refused to believe in a mystery so repugnant to their pride, beheld the mystery revealed and accomplished, even as God had assured them; they now became aware that they themselves had co-operated in bringing about its fullest and most glorious execution by those very measures which they had imagined best calculated to mar it, namely, the seduction of the first man and the poisoning of the very springs of life, of the principle of generation.

756. The highest type of humanity is Christ, Who stands at the head of all mankind and of the universe, and reaches the very Godhead, possessing as He does the Divine Nature, and subsisting as a Divine Person. But in order that the law of wisdom might be carried out to its full extent, and human nature be developed in all its various forms, from the highest to the lowest, it was requisite that all the full species, that is to say, all the types contained in the essence of man, should also be realized. This involved a very numerous series of human individuals corresponding to the types of good, and a very numerous series of human individuals corresponding to the types of evil: the latter all to the advantage and exaltation of the former.

757. The individuals destined to correspond to the types of good were to be taken from the corrupted mass in virtue of Christ's merits, and made vessels of election. The individuals destined to correspond to the types of evil were to be the work of the devil and of themselves, not directly willed by God, but merely permitted,

that so the devil might delude himself, and, with his associates, concur in producing that *maximum* of good that was to be derived from creatures with the *minimum* of divine intervention.

758. Now, how could Christ communicate a portion of His holiness to other men, who had become unprofitable by sin? The obstacle to this communication arose from the eternal law of justice which demands: "that the sum of moral evil should be equally balanced with eudemonological evil;" in such a way that the created will that prefers the good of its own finite reality to the moral exigency of the infinite, should experience in its own reality as much of pain as it sought of pleasure. Christ took upon Himself to pay the enormous debt contracted by human nature; and having paid and more than paid the debt, He was able to save all those men whom His Supreme Bounty deemed it best to save.

759. But to discharge the debt due to Eternal Justice, He once more availed Himself of the power of evil, namely, of the devil, and of such men as God permitted to be banded together with him. Here again we have an example of God's drawing good from evil, and of the necessity of antagonism to obtain the greatest good, with the least amount of intervention on the part of the Almighty, but simply, so far as may be, through the action of creatures themselves. God accordingly permitted that the devil, and men in league with him, should put to death Christ, Who could not be seduced, like Adam, but Who, if He Himself willed it, could die. Wherefore Christ Himself said in the Garden: "Thinkest thou that I cannot ask My Father, and He will give Me

presently more than twelve legions of angels?" (1) Many are the truths contained in these words. In the first place, that Christ submitted to His passion willingly, and not in consequence of a stern command laid upon Him by His Father; since, had He prayed the Father in an absolute manner, the Father would have delivered Him from death by sending many legions of angels to His assistance. But this He would not agree to, except on the condition of not losing an iota of the greatest possible amount of good which could be purchased by His death; for He savoured the things that are of God, not the things that are of men, (2) the things of the Infinite, not those of the finite. He had already besought His Father that His chalice might pass away, but only, *if it were possible*, this is to say, if by its passing away no particle of the *maximum* of good to be derived from creatures by the least means, should be lost. Now, that this *maximum* of good could not be obtained without the death of Christ—a calculation quite beyond the grasp of human minds—was writ in the eternal decree, and recorded in the Old Testament. Hence Christ added: "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done?" (3) It was as if He had said: "I would beg of the Father to dispatch His angels to defend Me from death, were I not aware that it is set down in Holy Writ that I am to die. This clearly shows that My death is necessary in the great plan of Divine Goodness, which intends to derive the greatest amount of good with the least expenditure of power, and to this loving design I most willingly submit. This is My

(1) Matt. xxvi. 53. (2) Cf. Matt. xvi. 23.
(3) Matt. xxvi. 54.

Father's will, and therefore He it is Who holds out to Me this bitter chalice. (1) It is My will also, because I, too, as God, desire that greatest amount of good which My Father wills. As man, I submit to this Divine Will blindly, that is to say, without diving into the profound reasons of this disposition, and as if I were totally unacquainted with them, since I know full well that My Father's Will cannot be other than most excellent in its intent, and in itself worthy of adoration. Wherefore, if I were to summon to My defence legions of angels, and I should without doubt have them if I asked for them unconditionally from My Father, all this angelic power would be lavished to no avail, seeing that the means would not be the least when gauged by the end to be attained; consequently, I should be acting contrary to Eternal Wisdom and to the Will of My Father. I submit, therefore, and choose rather an undeserved passion and death. I willingly allow the hostile powers to attack Me with all their natural resources, and once more to defeat human nature in the fight. My Father will know well how to turn this momentary discomfiture into an everlasting victory."

760. It would be a crying injustice for an innocent man to be put to a most atrocious death, had he not himself renounced his right, and voluntarily accepted it. But such great sufferings endured by Christ without a cause, became in His hands a credit of infinite value, which the Father's justice was bound to acknowledge, since it is a canon of eternal justice "that all undeserved suffering should be compensated by an equal amount of joy." Now, what recompense, what joy did Christ demand from His Father? The salvation of His

(1) Jo. xviii. 11.

brethren, the rest of mankind. Christ's love towards men, therefore, took advantage of the enormous credit which He held in relation to God's justice to pay off the debt incurred by sinful humanity. Thus were accounts balanced to the immense advantage of man, and the equilibrium, required by Eternal Justice, between sin and its punishment, once more restored. After the removal of this obstacle, human nature could be healed of all its moral infirmities by the communication of the grace of the Incarnate Word, Who was able to communicate Himself to all human beings in any measure He pleased. And what was this measure? Precisely that which Infinite Wisdom and Goodness determined; that which agreed with the Law of the Least Means. Almighty God dispensed and continues to dispense that amount of grace which He knows will bring in the largest returns.

761. Accordingly, Christ was empowered to elect as many individuals of the human family as He saw vacant mansions in His Father's house.(1) What else could be meant by those mansions but the types of human nature corresponding to the various possible forms of good which flow from the essence of human nature, and which were from the beginning distinguished in the creative act, wherein Christ, even as man, beholds the models of the living stones to be built up into God's holy temple?

762. But beneath this hierarchy of the predestined commences another series of realized human types, in which it is likely that at the end of the world will be displayed all the forms which can be assumed by human nature devoid of grace, and sunk in sin. It

(1) John xiv. 2.

may be, however, that of these forms of evil developed in time, not all are to last for ever, but that only those forms will remain as final, which, in accordance with God's reckoning, will be found necessary for the greater glory of the saints, and, in general, to fill up the measure of good obtainable from humanity.

763. With regard to those human individuals who represent the evil human nature is capable of in all its varied forms and gradations, we must never lose sight of the fact that they are not placed in that deplorable state through God's agency, but through the devil's, and by the abuse of their own free-will. God does nothing more than permit more or less of wickedness, and prevent more or less of it by His grace, so that finally there may exist that variety which is necessary to the highest degree of beauty in the world, and the greatest amount of fruit that it can yield.

In fact, this *maximum* was only to be obtained through the most violent contest, and this could only be brought about by constituting a most powerful opposing force which, in truth, was made up of the rebel angels and of humanity allied with and enslaved to them. Of this humanity there remained on God's side no more than a lowly virgin, called by the prophets a rod coming forth out of the root of Jesse, from which root was to bud forth a flower whereon the Spirit of the Lord was to rest. (1) This budding shoot contained all the power for good.

764. Human nature thus appeared to be too unevenly divided between good and evil, since the whole of it sided with evil, except one individual of

(1) Is. xi. 1, 2.

the weaker sex, without lustre of pedigree or influence in the world. Again, this very individual was not preserved from evil by any virtue of her own, but by disposition of the Creator Who intended to constitute her as the starting point of His glory. Thus it came to pass that whilst human nature, with the exception of the Virgin of Nazareth, grew ever more degenerate, the Lord of the Universe said: "Behold I come" (1) to draw forth from the finite, become utterly worthless, an Infinite good. Then the Word was made flesh, and a terrible war began, not between two opposing forces of nature, but between the natural and the supernatural.

765. The flower that thus blossomed on the rod of Jesse was in itself a product of infinite worth and loveliness; it was a human individual exalted above all human greatness, an individual Who was GOD. Hence, even if all the rest of the human species had been lost, human nature would have brought forth most abundant fruit. The victory over evil by this fact alone was secured. But Christ, as has been seen, saved in addition innumerable other men, and paid most profusely the debt of all. He saved, namely, all those that were given Him by the Father, (2) to Whom is continually attributed in Scripture the great secret of predestination. Indeed, the calculation of the greatest amount of good to which predestination corresponds, can be adequately grasped by the mind of God alone. The Father made an eternal decree, wherein the Word, Who made it along with the Father, counted (so to say) how many, and of what kind, were to be the individuals of the human race raised to glory,

(1) Ps. xxxix. 8. (2) John xvii. 6–24.

in order that His vineyard might prove most fruitful; and by beholding them He created them.

766. As, then, the Man-God was to bestow His gifts on men according to the method required for the obtaining of the greatest results, how did He set about His great work?

He divided into two parts the restoration of His fellow-men, according to the two elements of which man is composed: 1st, the restoration of the *personal element;* 2nd, the restoration of the *natural element.*

He, moreover, arranged to work out this twofold restoration in two distinct times most remote from each other according to man's reckoning. For, the restoration of the *human person* takes place as soon as man believes and is baptized; whereas the restoration of *human nature* is effected at the end of the world by the resurrection of the body. Both these restorations are styled in Holy Writ *regenerations* (1), since by the first the person is regenerated, and by the second, man's nature, which is constituted by the union of the soul with the body. Thus these two restorations, or regenerations, are separated by a wide interval, part of which is made up of the life each one leads on earth. During this life, in which man, though regenerated as to the spirit, is linked to a body that is corrupted, disordered, and dead,—I mean to say, deserving of destruction and death,—there continues for each one of the just the combat, the antagonism which we have seen to be necessary for the perfection of virtue, and the absence of which would do away with the moral valour of the combatants, the most signal of victories, and the most glorious of triumphs.

(1) Tit. iii. 5; Matt. xix. 28.

767. Certain it is that, if the soul had not been regenerated by Christ, and a supernatural principle, the basis of a new personality, created within it, there would be no question of conflict or victory, since the champion would be wanting who alone might fight for the good cause and gain the day, namely, the supernatural principle which contends with all refractory nature. But if, together with the soul, Jesus Christ had forthwith restored the body also,—a thing He might easily have effected by His power,—in this case again there would have been no chance of a conflict, since there would have been no adversary in the field for man to meet. In the first case the contest would have been impossible, because the power for evil would have been the only one in existence; in the second case, because there would only have been the power for good. In neither of these two cases would the two contending parties necessary for the struggle have been brought together.

768. The present life, therefore, is for the *individual* who is redeemed a time of warfare, according to those words, "the life of man upon earth is a warfare." (1) The whole length of time the world will last is a period of conflict for the great mass of redeemed individuals who form the *City of God*. On this account the Kingdom of heaven is by Christ likened to a corn-field, over which an enemy has sowed cockle; for the cockle impedes the growth of the corn. Nevertheless, the master sees that it could not be rooted up without damaging the corn; wherefore he orders his servants to wait till the harvest time to gather it in. "The harvest," as our Blessed Lord explained, "is the end

(1) Job vii. 1.

of the world. And the reapers are the Angels. Even as cockle therefore is gathered up, and burnt with fire; so shall it be at the end of the world. The SON OF MAN (the Conqueror) shall send His Angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." (1) The 'sun' here meant is JESUS Christ Himself, Whom His followers shall resemble.

769. Now, having seen what time has been allotted to the conflict, the reader must next consider in what manner this warfare is conducted.

But first let us sum up in a few brief propositions what has been already considered.

The Infinite Goodness of God determined to raise the work of His hands to the highest degree of moral perfection. This supreme degree consists in the most perfect knowledge of God's Goodness, Wisdom and Power. Such knowledge could not be obtained except by a comparison between the creature's nothingness and the Creator's infinity. God, consequently, gave creatures an opportunity of performing a most profound act of self-abasement before Him, by recognizing their nothingness as contrasted with His greatness. On His giving such an opportunity to the angels by revealing to them the mystery of Divinized Humanity, some adored It, voluntarily abased themselves, acknowledged the greatness of God, and thus attained to that most sublime knowledge which constitutes the summit of moral perfection; others trusted in themselves more

(1) Matt. xiii. 39–43.

than in the power of that grace which held out such great promises to human nature, and forthwith became hideous demons. Man, too, seduced by the Devil, trusted in nature rather than in God and God's word. A like presumption was transmitted from father to son, a solitary exception being made in the case of the Virgin Mary, in whom the Divine Word found a pure and unsullied resting-place in which to become incarnate, and thus to restore to mankind a principle of salvation.

Next, it must be borne in mind that the Incarnate Word gave men "the power to be made the sons of God." (1) But, as they were to be raised to that height of moral perfection at which Infinite Goodness aims, it was required of them to co-operate in their own salvation. For this reason the alternative was again set before them, either of acknowledging the nothingness of nature as compared with the Creator, and of laying aside in consequence all confidence in finite beings, and trusting entirely in the Infinite; or, of trusting in, and clinging to, the finite. God gave them the supernatural power to adhere to the better part in this alternative: He gave them instructions to this effect, and assured them of their success in the end. They had most pressing need of such guidance, and for this reason He taught them unheard-of lessons of wisdom. He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain

(1) John i. 12.

mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."(1)

The pith of this divine lesson is, briefly: "Blessed are they that reckon nature as a mere nothing in comparison with what is above nature; blessed are they that trust not in what is finite, but in what is Infinite, that prefer the Creator to the creature."

But those words imply still more.

770. If nature had not been deteriorated by sin, and if man's nature, even after the regeneration of the spirit, had not remained in a disordered condition, JESUS CHRIST would never have pronounced the poor to be blessed, for wealth in itself is not an evil; He would not have called blessed the meek who yield to violence, because it is not wrong to repel unjust aggression by force; He would not have said that those who mourn are blessed, because, once more, there is no harm in the smile of pleasure. While nature was still untainted the sweets of nature were spread before man; riches, power, natural pleasure would all have harmonized with virtue, and not have formed a harmful allurement. On the contrary, as things are, such goods oftentimes prove an incentive to evil; moreover, they have become fleeting and transitory, even as nature itself given over to death is fleeting and transitory. In fine, even supposing they were neither seductive, nor fallacious, nor perishable, still they could not constitute the happiness of a man that has been regenerated, elevated so far above the

(1) Matt. v. 3–10.

natural order, born of the Holy Ghost, Who has in store for him a bliss so great that all the delights nature could give in exchange for it must pall. The happiness of the redeemed sinner, therefore, is incomparably superior to all pleasures the creature can afford—nay, it is wholly independent of them, or rather, so far above them that no created good can augment it, and, what is most marvellous, such that the very evils that exist in creation, are the fittest means for securing it in its very fullest extent.

771. On this account man thus renewed and regenerated was likewise taught to distrust merely natural good, as being infected with deadly poison, according to the words of St. John: "All that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. . . . . And the world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever." (1) He was taught and admonished to look upon those goods as flattering and deceitful, since nature quickly fades and passes away, whereas the supernatural principle imparts to man what nature cannot give, immortality, which is man's all. (2)

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." (3) The immortal life here spoken of which God

(1) 1. John ii. 16, 17.

(2) Immortality is here referred to in its complete sense, namely, of soul and body. For proofs of the natural immortality of the soul, see *Psychology*, Vol. I., Bk. v.—*Tr.*

(3) Rom. viii. 12, 13

promises to those who confide in Him alone, and not in nature, is so full of delight, that the very sufferings endured for it by corrupt human nature cease to be suffering. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God." (1)

772. Here we have a satisfactory reason for God's allowing nature to become disorganized, and to break away from that admirable alliance with virtue, whose cause it had espoused in the beginning, supplying it with every aid, and thwarting it in nothing. At present, nature is frequently at variance with virtue, acting the part of an unfaithful servant, and instead of lending a helping hand, causing all kinds of annoyance. But this very opposition brings out more luminously than ever the sublime power of the virtue ingrafted by Christ on tainted nature, and its independence on the finite, over which the Infinite, to Whom alone that triumphant virtue belongs, had gained so splendid a victory.

773. Such was the Redeemer's Gospel to mankind. And did men receive it?

Some did, others did not. The former, by siding with Christ, formed part of the power for good; the latter, by joining Satan, increased the power for evil. God once more permitted the defection of the latter, because this also was seen to be necessary to the production of the greatest good and of the most complete victory.

774. Now, as the moral good acquired by those who

(1) Rom. viii. 18, 19.

believed and followed Christ was of such value that all moral good within the bounds of nature sinks into utter insignificance beside it; so the moral wickedness of those who disbelieved and would not follow Christ, assumes a heinousness of the very deepest dye. Wherefore is it written that Christ came to bring separation between men; (1) and that He is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many; (2) that He is the corner-stone, and "whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder." (3) For this reason Christ said: "If I had not come, and spoken to them they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin." (4) They have no excuse, because to all those to whom the Gospel was preached was grace held out together with the Gospel; but they, through their unworthy dispositions, rejected it, and by this refusal, according to the prophecy of Simeon, "out of many hearts, thoughts were revealed." (5) In consequence of these their evil dispositions, they were not of God's planting; and "every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." (6)

775. True it is, that as God alone is to be glorified in whatever good is done, not even those who believed did so of their own power, but by a gratuitous gift, by God's free election of them from all eternity. Hence God says by the mouth of Isaias: "I was found by them that did not seek Me: I appeared openly to them that asked not after Me." (7) If God had not

(1) Matt. x. 35.
(2) Luke ii. 34.
(3) Matt. xxi. 42–44.
(4) John xv. 22.
(5) Luke ii. 35.
(6) Matt. xv. 13.
(7) Quoted by St. Paul, Rom. x. 20.

thus disposed the economy of their salvation, they would not have been able to know the infinity and Essential Goodness of God, nor to feel that unspeakable gratitude towards Him which forms the crowning point of their perfection. And yet those who have believed the Gospel must have had some remote predisposition to faith, which may have consisted in their being undeceived with respect to creatures, and in their having but a low esteem of their own worth. This want of self-depreciation was the occasion of the Jews' infidelity; for they neglected to receive the grace of faith in Christ through overweening confidence in their own good works, in the external works of the Law of Moses, and in the advantages of the natural order promised to those who observed that Law. They thus failed to yield to God the full measure of glory, according to which the creature attributes everything to the Creator, and nothing to itself. Such is the mystery of the reprobation of the Jews and of the vocation of the Gentiles, explained by the Apostle. (1) "The Gentiles," he says, "who followed not after justice, have attained to justice, even the justice that is of faith. But Israel, by following after the law of justice, is not come unto the law of justice. Why so? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were of works. For they stumbled at the stumbling-stone, as it is written: 'Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and a rock of scandal: and whosoever believeth in him, shall not be confounded.'" (2)

776. The power of evil hates the power of good, and hates it the more intensely, the more exalted is the perfection aimed at. Now, the plenitude of perfec-

(1) Rom. ix. 30–32. (2) Isaias xxviii. 16.

tion resided in Christ, because His human nature had been assumed by a Divine Person. He was the source of all moral good to those men that clung to Him, and the good they derived from Him was most sublime, most perfect, because supernatural and deiform. A necessary consequence was, therefore, that the power of evil made Christ a special object of attack; indeed, our Lord is called "a sign which shall be contradicted." (1) Another consequence was, that that enmity reached a pitch of fury that knew no bounds, because of the very exalted nature of His holiness. In the third place, that hatred extended likewise, in due proportion, to all those who shared in our Saviour's sanctity. The Divine Master forewarned His disciples: (2) "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember My word that I said to you: 'The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake: because they know not Him that sent Me. . . . He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also. . . . But (so it came to pass) that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: 'They hated Me without cause.'" (3)

The *world* here alluded to by Christ is man's finite reality, which loves and exalts itself instead of the Infinite, and for which Christ does not pray. Where-

(1) Luke ii. 34. (2) John xv. 18–26.

(3) Ps. xxiv. 19.

fore He asserts that "if they had been of the world, the world would have loved its own." But He puts His disciples on their guard against the world, bidding them not to trust in the finite, but in the infinite reality; and for this reason the world hates them. Finite reality, all taken up with itself, cannot practically recognize the dignity and majestic beauty of the Infinite Reality; therefore He says that the world does not know the Father, that is, practically and intimately. Yet the world knew Him well enough in a speculative manner by external manifestations, for Christ showed men the works of the Father. This speculative and outward knowledge was sufficient to beget a hatred of the Father, although it could not kindle love towards Him. "And now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father." (1) Frequent mention is made in Holy Writ of these two sorts of knowledge, the *speculative* and the *practical*, the necessary cognition and the voluntary recognition. (2) The world is destitute of the latter, because it wilfully refuses to acknowledge God's claims; but it can have, and cannot but have, the former, and is thereby rendered inexcusable.

777. The deadly hatred, then, that is characteristic of the power of evil, was roused to the highest pitch by the excellence of Christ's virtue, which, soaring on high, looked down with supreme contempt upon that nature which it saw to be wholly depraved and corrupt—pitying not its destruction and confiding in God alone as in the sole fountain of all good.

(1) John xv. 24.

(2) See the author's *Philosophy of Rights* ("Filosofia del Diritto"), Moral System, Sect. iii. 2.

Hence the fierce and obstinate persecutions, otherwise inexplicable, of which Christ and His Church have ever been the mark in ages gone by, and will be for all ages to come. Hence that fearful struggle, that war to the death between the two universal and never-failing cities.

778. The victory at which each aims is final felicity, part of which consists in dominion over the universe; for intelligences aspire after dominion, seek to do all that they like, and by their will to dispose of everything. The *City of the devil* hopes to find such independence of will and dominion over everything, in its own strength, in the strength of the creature; *the City of God* puts no trust in the finite, but expects to find everything in the infinite, in the power of Christ, in God. Consequently, the city of the devil is ever wont to be violent, for it keeps in continual commotion and agitation all the created forces it can control, nothing caring about virtue if only it can succeed in destroying the city of God, which interferes with that dominion and independence wherein it seeks its own contentment. The City of God, on the other hand, goes to work in a peaceful and tranquil way; for having no confidence in the resources of the finite, it looks up to God for its all, and heeds nothing else but virtue, fully convinced that God is the all-just rewarder of holiness. For this reason the City of God, while aspiring after the perfection of virtue, is meek and gentle, and in a manner at the mercy of the impious, according to those words of its Divine Head, Who said to those He sent: "Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves:" (1) "Blessed are ye when

(1) Matt. x. 16.

they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." (1)

779. Now, in this decisive battle, God sustains, if I may so say, two characters: that of the champion who fights, having taken human flesh, and that of an impartial judge who watches the conflict in order to reward and crown the most deserving.

While acting the part of the champion, He keeps the weapon of His power hidden, as it were, in the sheath of His humanity, and He combats in the guise of mortal humanity, affording it every opportunity to display its prowess in the field of virtue.

But not even as Judge does He employ His power, but brings into play His impartial justice and equity, pronouncing most just judgment. He reserves His power unto the end, to carry out this sentence. The only use He will make of that power will be to sanction the unbiassed judgment which will be passed on the combatants, and to reward him who shall have striven lawfully.

780. It must be here observed that the power of evil and the power of good make their victory to consist in things quite contrary to one another.

The power of evil would think it had gained the mastery, if only it had succeeded in these two points: 1st, in seducing human nature, and stripping it of all justice; 2nd, in exterminating it by death, which is the consequence of sin.

The power of good, on the contrary, makes its victory to consist in righteousness of the soul despite all temptations, the consequences being left in the hands of Almighty God.

(1) Matt. v. 11, 12.

781. Hence the power of evil coming into conflict with the Man-God, left no means untried to seduce Him. The angel of falsehood, abusing the very words of inspired Writ, tempted Him to gluttony, presumption and ambition! (1) This most audacious attempt having failed, there remained another course, that of putting Him to death, of destroying His human nature, in which the power for good existed. The Man-God, Whose only concern was to attain to the highest moral perfection, suffered death, from which, had He willed, He might have exempted Himself, and the eudemonological consequences He left to God. Fly from death He would not, because His dying afforded Him the opportunity of exercising the greatest and most heroic act of confidence and of love towards His Father. In this way the power of evil imagined for a moment that it had destroyed the power of good, and gained a complete triumph.

782. But this was a vain delusion. The enemy had not considered that, although Christ's human nature was dissolved, the elements of this nature, namely, the body and the soul, still subsisted, and, though those elements could not of themselves ever re-unite, they were conjoined to a supernatural principle incapable of death, the very Person of the Divine Word consubstantial with the Father. Thus death had not, as at first appeared, put the real victor out of the field. This conqueror had been worsted as to His lower nature, His Humanity; but here again it was the finite which perished, it was the finite which tortured and wrecked the finite: the Infinite remained unscathed. Only His garments, as Scripture has it, were

(1) Matt. iv. 1–9.

dyed with red, while He trod His enemies under foot, as grapes in the wine-press; (1) that is to say, God subjected to punishment that very humanity which He Himself, in the excess of His condescension, had chosen for His own abode.

783. Then it was that the Father Himself, stepping in in the quality of arbiter, decided in favour of the Conqueror, Who was not really dead, but lives for ever and ever. This Conqueror along with the Father raised to life again the human nature which had placed unbounded confidence in God, and had practised and given proof of moral perfection of the highest order. This moral perfection lay in the great reverence and love He bore towards His Father; for, although resurrection and glory were due to His human nature as the fitting meed of its fidelity and piety, nevertheless Christ, as man, preferred to depend on the liberality of His Father, so that all glory might redound to the sole bounty of the Father. He behaved, accordingly, as if He had not merited so great a favour,—this, too, is an act of consummate perfection, through such a motive, to renounce one's right to an extraordinary recompense,—"He in the days of His flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard for His reverence." (2) Here was human nature owning that it was mortal, and protesting that it could lay no claim to immortality as its own prerogative, but only through the mere clemency of God; confessing at the same time that virtue and fidelity to the Almighty ought to be maintained even without any pretence to remuneration; that it is only right for

(1) Is. lxiii. 1–4. (2) Heb. v 7.

the finite being to offer itself as a holocaust to the Infinite.

Hence, Christ when petitioning His Father for life, founds His request on nothing else than the foreknown will of the same Father, to wit, on the eternal predestination by which life and immortal glory had been decreed to our Lord's humanity for immolating itself as a victim of love, to the Father's honour and glory. "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now glorify Thou me, O Father with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee." (1) In fact, the creative act contained from all eternity the whole series of events which were to take place in time with regard to Christ, including His passion and consequent glory; and Christ, beholding them in the creative act, asked that they should be fulfilled in time, as they already were with the Father.

784. The palm, therefore, having been awarded by God, most just Judge, to the immortal and invincible Conqueror, this same Hero, that is, the Person of the Divine Word, which had never abandoned either the body or the soul of Christ, re-united these two elements; and the human nature that erewhile had been overthrown by its wicked adversary, appeared again resplendent with glory, and displaying its trophy. The enemy of all good could not complain that God had not acted with sufficient fairness in this matter, on the ground that He had intervened with His Omnipotence. Indeed, Christ, after being put to death, rose again of Himself, without the aid of any extraneous power; for the executioners had not slain His Divine

(1) John xvii. 4, 5.

Personality. But the Person of the Word, while it called to life again its own humanity, a thing it always had a perfect right to do,—conformed even in this respect to the eternal, infinitely just and most meet decree of God's bounty, and to Christ's humble entreaty to which the all-loving Divinity could not turn a deaf ear.

785. In this manner the power of evil, having joined battle with Christ, was foiled in both the schemes it had rashly concerted, viz., of *seduction* and *destruction*, the former belonging to the moral order, the other to the physical. As to the former, far from decoying Christ into sin, the devil afforded Him a most fitting opportunity of displaying with infinite merit before the eyes of intelligent creatures the dazzling brightness of His sanctity. As to the latter, Satan, although permitted to exert his whole power, proved to be much weaker than the Saviour; for his power extended no farther than the killing of Him, within whom the whole power for good lay concealed. It was beyond his power to destroy the Person, Who was enabled to restore the human nature destroyed by death, and to adorn it with all that brightness, power and glory which the Divine Person was willing and able and, in a manner, called upon to bestow.

786. At this juncture the whole conflict seemed at an end. In fact, Christ being risen again, said: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth." (1) And even before His passion, seeing in the creative act that this power was from all eternity conferred upon Him when risen again, He had said: "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may

(1) Matt. xxviii. 18.

glorify Thee, as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him." (1) Christ, then, having in fair fight acquired power over all things, from that very hour could do with the world just as He liked, so much so, that the will of the Lord, to use the phrase of Isaias, was prosperous in His hand. (2) He was able, therefore, to save all men, to deliver them from every temptation and infirmity, and to strengthen them in what was good. But in the exalted counsel of His most wise bounty He would not act thus, because He designed greater and better things for men, namely, to draw out of men themselves and their own acts all that moral good which they could bring forth. By this method, not only inasmuch as God, but also as man, He followed the same Law of Wisdom, that of the Least Means, according to which eternal predestination had been ordained. In gazing upon this He beheld all that He wished to do, because He saw the most perfect and sublime object of the Divine Will, the *exemplar* from which to copy. Now, in conformity with the infinitely profound calculation made by Eternal Wisdom, a larger quantity of good was to be gathered from the human race, if all the redeemed were in turn allowed to enter the lists and measure their strength with the power of evil, as their Redeemer had done, and by their own valour gain their victory and crown. Even though some succumbed in the fight, their loss was amply compensated for by the

(1) John xvii. 1, 2.

(2) "And the Lord was pleased to bruise Him in His infirmity: if He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand." (Is. liii. 10.)

immeasurably greater gain accumulated by the conquerors. On this account Christ oftentimes alludes to those who during His life-time on earth were given to Him by His Father, such as the Apostles and first disciples, and He prays for those also who would believe on their word. He prays not for the world, He prays not that all men without exception should believe: not because He is not Lord of all; but because He wishes to exercise His dominion to the greater advantage of the whole of mankind taken in a body: a result which could not be arrived at unless some of the combatants were allowed to perish of their own accord. With the will of good pleasure, therefore, He wills the salvation of all those and of those alone that can be saved by a system which produces the *maximum* of good; for His will, as God, is identical with the Father's, wherein He sees what souls are to be saved in order that there may be realized the greatest amount of good necessarily willed by Infinite Goodness and Wisdom. "I have manifested Thy name," He said, "to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world . . . . I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me; because they are Thine; and all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them . . . . Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one as We also are . . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who, through their word, shall believe in Me: that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee: that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." (1)

He prays not, then, that the disciples be taken out of this world, in which and against which they must fight; neither does He pray for the world, that is to say, for those whose delights and hopes are all centred in the finite reality of the creature. But He prays for those who, without trusting in the finite, believe His words and the words of His representative, the Church; that so the world itself may believe in His mission, and thus cease to be 'world,' or, remaining 'world' may be subdued by the brilliant light of His eternal truth and glory. All this He asks through love of the Father; for in the salvation of the predestined He likewise seeks and loves the will and glory of the Father; "because they are Thine," He says, "and all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine."

787. The Apocalypse, or the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, is the manifestation of the mighty combat which Christ, arisen and glorious, continues, in His faithful servants, to maintain with the powers of evil till the end of time—not from necessity, but of His own spontaneous and generous will. Hence, this mysterious book, according to the exposition of the Fathers, contains the history, as it were, of the vicissitudes of the Church; a history which recounts a series of manifold conflicts.

788. The manner in which Christ appears to St. John, as described in the first chapter, leaves us in no doubt as to that plenitude of power which has been given to Christ after His Resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of the Father. "I am," He says, "the first and the last, and am alive and was dead; and behold I am living for ever and ever, and have the keys of death and of hell." (1) If, then, He does not carry

(1) Apoc. i. 17, 18.

things with a high hand, and still allows death and hell to war against mankind, it is not from any want of power to prevent their raging. God would deal generously even with the powers of evil themselves, knowing that their confusion will on this very account be all the greater in the end; He leaves them at liberty to renew the fight, because the victories of the saints will be thereby multiplied, and a greater good result finally from the strife.

789. The Apocalypse has two principal parts; for, St. John is ordered to write the things "which are," to wit, the state of the Church as it was then—and this he does in the second and third chapters—and the things "which must be done hereafter," (1) that is, the different states through which the Church was to pass in succession after the death of the Apostles,—and this is what is done in the remainder of the book.

790. In chapter V., there appears in heaven the book of eternal predestination, containing the names of the elect,(2) who constitute that greatest possible good which God had decreed should be yielded by human nature; and the opening of the book means the fulfilment of that most excellent eternal decree. This fulfilment is the work of Christ, victorious and risen from the dead, and it is so marvellous as to have appeared utterly impossible of attainment. "And I wept much," says St. John, "because no man was found worthy to open the book, nor to see it" (for who among the sinful children of

(1) Apoc. i. 19.

(2) That the sealed book contained only the names of the elect is clear from c. xx., 12, where the "Book of Life" is distinguished from the books in which are written the deeds of other men.

men was able to see the decree of eternal predestination, let alone to accomplish it ?). "And one of the ancients said to me: Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I saw: and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the ancients, a Lamb standing as it were slain, having seven horns and seven eyes; which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. And when he had opened the book, the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of Saints. And they sung a new canticle, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." (1) This passage refers to the Church of the ancient people of God which was detained in Limbo, and which being admitted, through the death and resurrection of Christ, to the vision of the Creative Act in God, discerns therein Christ's glory, as well as the way in which He accomplishes the predestination of the saints belonging to the Church, by gathering to Himself the remnants of the seed of Abraham, destined to be the means of salvation to all the nations among which they shall be dispersed. For, the four-

(1) Apoc. v. 4–10.

and-twenty ancients, corresponding to the heads of the four-and-twenty sacerdotal families, represent the Jewish priesthood, and the four living creatures represent the four prophets who proclaimed the four prerogatives of Christ, namely, His divinity, His humanity, His kingdom, and His priesthood: now by the *priesthood* and by *prophecy* is represented the whole of the Jewish Church. Wherefore this Church, admitted to the vision of the Creative Act, gives glory to God in the following words, expressive of the honour due to Him for the Wisdom and Goodness of His Providence: "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory, and honour and power; because Thou hast created all things, and for Thy will they were (in the Creative Act) and have been created (in themselves)." (1) The Lamb receives the book from the right hand of the Father, because the Father has committed to Him the execution of the decree of predestination; (2) He has committed it to His very humanity both because by the immolation of His human nature He saved the world, and because with the perfect sanctity of His humanity He sought only to do the Father's Will, seen by Him in the beatific vision, and with the perfect wisdom of this same humanity, directed by His divinity as by the principal and personal agent, He carried out that Will most fully. Therefore it was that He had said of His disciples: "They were Thine, and Thou hast given them to Me." But St. John says: "The Lamb was standing, as it were slain," (3) because Christ received the right and the power of carrying the decree of predestination

(1) Apoc. iv. 11. (2) John xvii. 6.

(3) Apoc. v. 6.

into effect immediately after the consummation of His holocaust; even before His rising from the dead. Although He then seemed extinct in the grave, His humanity alone was a prey to death, while His Person —because divine—still lived, and, in union with His soul, appeared to the Fathers in Limbo, as their deliverer.

791. But how is it, then, that when the book later on comes to be opened by the Lamb, the visions of St. John begin again, and the seals of the book, as though it were still closed, are opened one after the other at intervals of time and with varied events?

Through His death, Christ had gained the victory; hence all obstacles which hindered the opening of the book of predestination were removed; since Christ possessed, and most deservedly, the fullest power to carry out the eternal decrees and save the elect. Now, in consequence of His being risen, and having taken with Him to heaven, the saints of old who were captives in the lower places, these—who were now "made unto God a kingdom and priests," (1)—had the great book laid open to them. But there still remained to be fulfilled the predestination of the saints of the new Church, pursuant to the laws of that Wisdom which had dictated the book when the Victor read what was fitting for Him to do; and these could not be gathered together into the celestial kingdom, till after a long course of ages. Therefore it seems to me that the opening of the seven seals is the use of the seven great means or operations by which Jesus Christ, already Lord and Ruler of the world, fulfils His Father's hidden Will, which He alone, as God, can

(1) Apoc. v. 10.

read in the Divine Essence, and which, as man also, He has been made worthy to read through the merit of His heroic virtue. These great means, these great and divine operations are appropriately called *seals*, because in Holy Writ, as we have already said, the word *seal* expresses the signs of the divine greatness, and, as it were, the impress of God Himself acting in the universe.

792. Thus, as the first opening of the book, which signifies the fulfilment of the predestination of the house of Jacob, is indicated to St. John by one of the four-and-twenty ancients representing the old priesthood—guardian of the Mosaic law; so the opening of the four first seals is indicated to St. John by the four living creatures representing the prophets, the proclaimers of Christ's triumph to all mankind, invited by Him to the Gospel.

793. Christ, risen from the dead, acts in the world as King, as Priest, as Man and as God; and to these four prerogatives seem to correspond the four modes of operation by which He conducts His inheritance—human nature, to the good it has to reach, namely, the greatest glory of God and its own highest moral good. Christ having to be glorified in each of these His four magnificent prerogatives, is pleased, it seems to me, in the different ages of the Church, to make one shine forth more vividly than another, by a mode of operation analogous to one rather than the other.

794. As King, vested with all power, He infallibly obtains all that He wills, and the royal mode of His action shows itself first in His Resurrection, where He comes forth from the tomb victorious over death, and

then in His triumph at the final judgment; wherefore this prerogative is displayed with particular force in the beginning and end of the Church, and hence in the beginning and end of the Apocalypse.

795. As Priest, Man, and God, He disposes of the means whereby the end of this Royalty is infallibly attained, by exalting the supernatural principle communicated to His servants, and at the same time humbling nature, which must appear as it were annihilated in the presence of the infinite. And how does He do this?

796. In His capacity of High Priest He immolates victims. As He first immolated Himself, so He offers mankind, day by day, as a holocaust to the Creator, though with a widely different issue in the case of the godly and of the impious. For, in the godly, while nature is humbled and destroyed, after the likeness of what took place in Himself, there still remains in them the supernaturalized personal principle, on which alone they rely, and through which all that they have lost will be abundantly repaid.

797. But in the impious, nature having once failed, all ground of hope will have vanished for ever. Hence, Christ says to His disciples: "Do not think that I am come to send peace upon earth; I am not come to send peace, but the sword." (1) Again, "he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it." (2) So, by violent deaths and by wars ordained by that Providence in whose hands are all things, Christ chastises and brings to naught the impious, to whom

(1) Matt. x. 34. (2) *Ibid.* 38, 39.

therefore, these misfortunes are terrible and irreparable ills. The priestly mode of Christ's action is strikingly visible in the first ages of the Church, namely, in the sacrifices of the martyrs and in the appalling deaths with which their persecutors were visited.

798. As Man, He fasted first, and then enjoined fasting on His followers, who, through this penitential spirit, purify themselves more and more. They are fully aware that "not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."(1) Like their Master, they have another food besides the earthly;(2) and, in fine, Christ gives them a supersubstantial food, His own flesh, under the sacramental species, together with the sweet-smelling ointment of His grace, which can never be destroyed.(3) On the other hand, He makes use of famine to chastise the world, to humble it, and to convince it that it has not in itself wherewith to subsist. This mode of Christ's action as Man may be observed in the penitents and recluses who succeeded the martyrs; and likewise in the dearths which were so frequent in the middle ages, and, in general, in the poverty, the decadence of industry, and the ignorance which so long afflicted and humbled the world.

799. As God, He comes to the bed of death to take His elect as a royal bridegroom coming for his lovely bride, that He may introduce her into His bright and festive mansion,(4) while He leaves the obstinately perverse to an evil death, casting them into hell. Thus to the heresies of the XVIth century and to the

(1) Matt. iv. 4.
(2) Jo. iv. 32–34.
(3) Apoc. vi. 6.
(4) Cant. i. 3.

infidelity which has sprung from them, Christ opposed as fitting counterparts the reprobation of many on the one hand, and on the other a great number of extraordinary saints, who at that period adorned His Church; by His Divine Power exercising justice on the first, and showing grace and mercy to the second.

800. Here, then, we have the first four seals opened:—

The lion, the symbol of royal dignity, indicates to St. John how, the first seal being opened, a white horse came forth, "and he that sat on him had a bow, and there was a crown given him, and he went forth conquering that he might conquer." (1) He was already a conqueror, and yet He came forth to conquer still. This is Christ risen from death as the King of glory, Who traverses the earth and does what He pleases there, nothing being able to withstand the strength of His love.

801. The calf, the symbol of the priestly office, indicates to St. John how, on the opening of the second seal, "there went out another horse that was red; and to him that sat thereon it was given that he should take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and a great sword was given to him." (2) It is the era of the persecutions; and the blood-coloured horse and his rider represent the power which Christ has to scourge the various regions of the world with violent and appalling deaths; and perhaps this power is an angel, deputed by and representing Christ in the execution of this office.

802. The third animal, with the face of a man, the symbol of Christ's human nature, indicates to St.

(1) Apoc. vi. 2. (2) *Ibid.* 4.

John how, on the opening of the third seal, there came forth "a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of scales in his hand," and a voice said: "Two pounds of wheat for a penny, and thrice two pounds of barley for a penny." (1) It is the period of the middle ages; and the black horse and his rider represent the power which Christ has to scourge the world from region to region, by dearths and by famine, and perhaps this power is an angel deputed by and representing Christ in the execution of this office.

803. Lastly, the eagle, the symbol of Christ's divine nature, indicates to St. John how, the fourth seal being opened, there came forth "a pale horse, and he that sat upon him, his name was Death, and hell followed him. And power was given to him over the four parts of the earth, to kill with the sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." (2) This is the time in which human reason, grown bold after the middle ages, abuses science for corrupting the world by means of error and of unbelief, and the pale horse, and death, and hell represent the power which Christ has to chastise the reprobate with eternal loss, leaving them to die in sin; and perhaps this also means an angel, deputed by and representing Christ, in the execution of this just and terrible sentence.

804. In like manner, at the breaking of the three last seals, events occur in which Christ intervenes by a display of His three prerogatives as Priest, Man, and God; and the whole of the great drama is brought to a close by the return of Christ as King, Who, having judged the world and executed justice on His enemies,

(1) Apoc. vi. 5, 6. (2) *Ibid.* vi. 8.

enters the marriage feast with His royal bride, the Church of His elect.

805. At the opening of the fifth seal are heard the prayers of the martyrs who ask to be avenged on the ungodly that have shed their innocent blood. They believe the time for revenge to have arrived, because Christ has now been glorified in every way, as King, as Priest, as Man, and as God. But He must be glorified anew after each of these four ways, as it is written: "I have both glorified Him and will glorify Him again." (1) Up to this He has been glorified in men as *individuals*, now He must be glorified in men as members of society. The two powers of good and evil have not yet been fully organized; and their organization must be made the most complete possible; for evil is permitted to strengthen itself and to develop all its forces, in order that it may be vanquished all the more gloriously by good. Therefore the martyrs are told in reply that the number of victims is not yet filled up, and that they are to rest a while under the altar till the eternal High Priest shall have consummated the great sacrifice which He is to offer in the person of His servants. The retribution which divine justice owes to the martyrs, hastens the coming of the kingdom of God. The prayers of the martyrs which cannot go unheard, is a fifth means added to the above four, and, together with them, continues to further the fulfilment of the great design of Providence. This marks a time of new persecutions, such as we see taking place every day, especially in Japan and China, and in other regions where the Gospel is still being announced. The difference

(1) John xii. 28.

between these persecutions and martyrdoms, and those others which will happen in the last times, is, that the former are occasioned by efforts to spread the Gospel abroad through the whole world, while the latter will be inflicted by apostates in the midst of a world already become Christian.

806. Good is organized upon earth in the Church of Jesus Christ, the great society of believers; and the fifth age is destined to preach the Gospel to infidel nations, which the preachers will water with their blood.

807. Whilst the number is being filled up of those who give their lives for Christ, and voluntarily make themselves victims with Him, in order to diffuse the Gospel to the most remote corners of the earth, the sixth seal is opened. The humanity of Christ now appears as the principal agent. At this stage begin planetary phenomena predicted by the prophets and by Christ Himself; and in these prodigies Christ shows the power which He, as man, possesses over the elements, as He had in the three preceding seals shown His power over human nature. First of all, a great earthquake strikes terror into the whole world, now risen to the highest pitch of civilization and fiercely proud of itself. Isaias describes it.(1) But what says the Apostle? "The kings of the earth, and the princes, and tribunes, and the rich and the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of mountains. And they say to the mountains and the rocks: Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."(2) Thus

(1) Is. ii. (2) Apoc. vi. 15, 16.

terrified and effectually cured of their presumption, men acquire that sense of wholesome fear which prepares the way for the Divine mercy. Then it is that Christ, mindful of His Father according to the flesh and of the covenant which God made with them, gathers the remnants of Israel, a fixed number of the several tribes, into the bosom of the Church, which revives with new fervour, and embraces within her fold an innumerable multitude of all nations. The conversion of the Jews was already foretold by the ancient prophets and by Moses himself. (1)

808. This is the time when baptism, which marks the soul with an indelible character, as well as the other sacraments instituted by Christ and operating through a virtue communicated to them by His most sacred and glorified humanity, are received by many fervent souls to the great increase of their sanctification. But in others, human pride still prevails; hence it is necessary that Christ should at last employ new means belonging directly to His Divinity, such as new interior illuminations bestowed on the teachers of His Church whereby to crush errors, and likewise new efficacy of divine grace and charity communicated to the saints of His Church whereby to vanquish the coldness of men and their hate of holy things. This is signified by the opening of the seventh seal.

809. For, after the Church has been in the enjoyment of so much prosperity and peace, and piety has

(1) "After all the things aforesaid shall find thee, in the latter time thou shalt return to the Lord thy God, and shalt hear His voice. Because the Lord Thy God is a merciful God: He will not leave thee, nor altogether destroy thee, nor forget the covenant by which He swore to thy fathers." (Deut. iv. 30, 31.)

everywhere flourished, God permits it to be more than ever disturbed by false systems of doctrine—a new outburst of human and diabolical wickedness—productive of great disorders in the world, which nevertheless must also be withstood and vanquished by the wisdom and power of the Son of God. Wherefore at the opening of the seventh seal, appear on the scene seven angels, seemingly denoting seven rulers and doctors of the Church (as is indicated at the very beginning of the revelation in the angels of the seven Churches of Asia), having each a trumpet, by which I am inclined to think is signified the good or evil doctrines to be proclaimed by them with striking effects upon the world. But before they blow their trumpets and convulse the world, another angel, taking some fire from the altar in heaven, throws it down on the earth prepared for it, producing peals of thunder and great earthquakes. This angel seems also to denote a great saint, and perhaps a Roman Pontiff of sublime sanctity, who with the fire of divine charity performs stupendous prodigies to the terror and dismay of the wicked. Then the four first angels sound their trumpets in succession; whereupon four perverse doctrines arise, causing evils of the worst description. The blowing of the trumpet of the fifth angel follows next, and the infernal doctrine indicated by it is the signal of a war which will be countenanced by the support of the secular powers. Still worse is the discord consequent on the preaching of the sixth doctrine, signified by the sound of the sixth trumpet. The wars produced by this will be of a yet more destructive nature. Two hundred millions of horsemen are said to be engaged in the combat

(perhaps in succession), and the description of their weapons clearly corresponds with the invention of gunpowder and firearms.(1) These doctrines and these commotions called by Christ "the beginnings of sorrows,"(2) will corrupt the world anew, to such a degree as to re-introduce idolatry. After the power of evil has worked such havoc, Christ will come to the rescue of humanity, thus far perverted, by the immediate action of His divinity. He will so illumine the minds of His servants that instead of being scandalized by these events they will begin to have a clear insight into the hitherto incomprehensible ways of Divine Wisdom, and the mystery of divine predestination will appear so right and holy to them that they cannot help giving infinite glory to God. Christ, Who reveals the great mystery, is called an angel. "And I saw," says the sacred text, "another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was on his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. And he had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth. And he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth."(3) The open book is the secret of Providence, now made manifest; and the sea and the land signify the angelic and human nature, over which the divinity of Christ holds entire sway. The communication of light which Christ here makes to His Church, is signified by the voices resembling seven thunders, which St. John is forbidden to write, but must only indicate or note by way of enigma, in order that the

(1) Apoc. ix. 16–18. (2) Matt. xxiv. 8.
(3) Apoc. x. 1–3.

full character of the great work of God may remain hidden until that time when its disclosure shall have become necessary for men's salvation. By that disclosure man will also come to know the part yet remaining to be fulfilled on the sounding of the trumpet of the seventh angel; and it is for this reason that the book of divine Providence and divine predestination is given to St. John to eat, (1) St. John representing herein the saints of that period, to whom such light shall be given; while the eating of the book signifies the mastering of its contents with a practical and not merely a speculative knowledge, such as might be obtained by simply reading it. Therefore it is said to St. John: "Thou must prophesy again to many nations and prophets, and tongues, and kings." (2) This revelation is indicated in a compendious manner, and not written, but merely hinted at, in the oath made by the angel of the Testament, Jesus Christ: "Time shall be no longer. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as He hath declared by His servants the prophets." (3) The expression, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel," is used, to indicate thereby a long era; and the expression, "when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be accomplished," because Christ shall then begin to put forth His power as king, and shall then see His kingdom founded immovably on this earth. Hence, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, mighty voices are heard in

(1) Apoc. x. 10. (2) *Ibid.* 11.

(3) *Ibid.* 6, 7.

heaven, saying: "The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall reign for ever and ever. Amen." (1) The events, therefore, destined to be fulfilled during the sound of the seventh trumpet are fore-announced in the time of the sixth, for the enlightenment and support of the faithful ones, represented by St. John. This holy seer measures the temple of God, beheld by Him as though it were already completed, and recognizes the two prophetic witnesses destined to preach, work miracles, suffer martyrdom, rise again after three days and a half, and then go up into heaven. Their enemies, in whose presence these events took place, are at that same moment overtaken by an earthquake that destroys seven thousand of them; the rest are struck with fear, and give glory to the God of heaven. (2)

810. In the days, therefore, of the seventh angel, representing Christ Himself, Who comes to oppose the false prophets that have gone before, and to remedy the evils which have befallen men at the sounding of the six trumpets, the kingdom of Christ upon earth is consummated, and the four-and-twenty elders celebrate the event in these words: "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, Who art, and Who wast, and Who art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and Thou hast reigned," (3) words which allude to the great regal act of the judgment of the reprobate and the reward of the elect. (4)

811. The first judgment delivered during the sounding of the seventh trumpet is that against the

(1) Apoc. xi. 15.
(2) *Ibid.* 1–13.
(3) *Ibid.* 17.
(4) *Ibid.* 18, 19.

devils, and the sentence is executed by the good angels. "And there was a great battle in heaven; Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven." (1)

812. The expulsion of the devils from heaven signifies their having been completely baffled by the Wisdom of God, Who would not bring His Power into play until He had scattered to the winds all the cavils and objections which the prevaricating angel, in his exceeding subtilty, was opposing to Christ's victory on behalf of man. The Almighty permitted the fiend (as he had done in the case of Job), to make use of all these different trials with which he asked to test the virtue of the saints; but all ended in failure. When the last of these experiments or temptations had been exhausted, Satan, brought to utter confusion, could no longer return into God's presence to dispute with Him and to sue for further trials. Nevertheless, although silenced, far from acknowledging his discomfiture, he resists the chastisement which Michael and the other celestial spirits inflict on him by force. But if Satan is vanquished on the ground of argument and then cast out of heaven, the house of perfect wisdom, he has yet another way left for giving vent to his lawless hate of men; and that is by using his power, blind though it be, and acknowledged by himself as iniquitous. This is what is meant by "Satan being thrown down from heaven to earth." "And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world; and he was

(1) Apoc. xii. 7.

cast unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying: Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God, day and night." (1) These accusations are precisely the evils which the devil made use of in order to cast doubt on the victory obtained by Christ in His saints, and the crucial tests he demanded whereby to try their fidelity, all of which had already come to an end!

813. All his former attempts having thus proved vain, Satan, full of rage, betakes himself to the one means of warfare still remaining to him, I mean the power which, as a spirit, he possessed over matter. Therefore it is written: "Woe to the earth, and to the sea, because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." (2)

814. Thus the equity, the generosity, the wisdom and the perfect justice of Christ vanquish the devil by degrees, driving him back in succession from one stronghold to another, until he is at last thrust down into hell.

The great strife then was no longer in heaven, but on earth; a trial not of skill, but of power. Now, here also Christ was to triumph in the most complete manner, and in order that this might be brought about, the power of the dragon was not at first to be crushed; on the contrary, full scope was to be allowed him to do his worst.

815. As a consequence, satanic and human malice (signified by the two beasts coming up, one from the

(1) Apoc. xii. 9, 10. (2) *Ibid.* 12.

sea, and the other from the land), (1) will combine in a most powerful organization. It will be the epoch of satanic miracles, so portentous as to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect. (2) The beast seems to be a great potentate, to whom many kings owe allegiance, and one of the portents by which he will amaze the world will be the healing of a most fatal wound inflicted on one of his tributary kings who apparently is dead. (3) Now the potentate set up by the dragon, and invested with satanic power, will prevail against the godly, form a universal monarchy, and cause himself to be adored as God. As his persecution will be of the most violent kind, the prophecy concludes by saying: "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints," (4) that is, the extreme and greatest trial of their faith and constancy. This potentate will reign for three and a half years, and during this same period two prophets, most probably Enoch and Elias, will appear, as had been foretold, preaching the truth of God for a thousand two hundred and sixty days, opposing true to counterfeit miracles, and in the end receiving the martyr's crown. "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascended out of the abyss" (the same as the sea), "shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." (5) With this same potentate, a blasphemer of God, an instrument of the devil, and a warrior most violent and cruel, will be associated as prime minister, a most crafty intriguer. He is the second beast, who comes up from the land, and represents human nature.

(1) Apoc. xiii.
(2) Matt. xxiv. 24.
(3) Apoc. xiii. 3.
(4) *Ibid.* 10.
(5) *Ibid.* xi. 7.

This man will put on the mask of gentleness and, by consummate hypocrisy and most subtle sophistry, will reduce the nations. Wherefore it is said that he "had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke as a dragon." (1) To this most skilled master in the dread art of evil, his lord—that is the first beast—will intrust powers most ample; whence it is said: "And he executed all the power of the former beast in his sight;" (2) and to indicate that he is precisely the minister here referred to, it is added: "And he caused the earth and them that dwell therein to adore the first beast, whose wound to death was healed." (3) As a means of seducing the world, this wily one will also simulate prodigies by making use of the natural sciences, which at that time will have been carried to the height of perfection, so as even to bring down fire from heaven (perhaps by means of some great electric contrivance), and to give life to the image of his lord and make it speak as a man (it may be by having found out the secret of producing living organisms). And although he will put to death those who do not adore his lord's image, to which he has, at least in appearance, given life, his cunning will be greater than his violence, as shown in his legal enactments, one of them being an inhibition to buy or sell by any one who has not the mark of the beast. (4) Thus the craftiness of man is still kept as an instrument of the devil; and the reason is, that this kind of craftiness has not, like that of the devil, been as yet baffled in all its devices. Hence the description of this kind of persecution concludes with the words: "Here is

(1) Apoc. xiii. 11.
(2) *Ibid.* 12.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Ibid.* 17.

wisdom," (1) that is, the wisdom of the saints, because they will require the greatest wisdom in order successfully to withstand the evil devices of such a seducer.

816. Here it is proper to remark that during this persecution, greater than any that had preceded it, the Church of Christ will contain a certain number of saints of the highest order, and so invincible as to make the two beasts, notwithstanding all their power, despair of prevailing over them. But they will live in a humble state, secluded from social power, hidden in solitude, and practising therein the religious life with a fervour hitherto unknown. In this sense, it will be the persecution of Nero over again, which was the occasion of the solitary and contemplative life, especially of the Fathers of the Egyptian deserts. Regarding this point the prophecy seems quite clear.

817. The pre-Christian Church conceived and brought forth its fruit, the Redeemer, in the pangs of sorrow. Vainly did the dragon seek to devour the "man-child," for He "was taken up to God and to His throne." (2) When, therefore, the dragon, baffled in that mode of warfare which we have described above, fell down upon this earth, he no longer found Christ against whom to exercise his brute force. At this time, then, the Catholic Church, which is nothing but a continuation of the Church of old, betakes herself with her chosen ones to the wilderness, as she did in the first ages of her existence, so long as the tremendous persecution of the two beasts continues—"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God, that there they should feed her a thousand two hundred and sixty days." (3) Though

(1) Apoc. v. 18. (2) *Ibid.* xii. 5. (3) *Ibid.* 6.

the serpent persecuted the woman even in her retirement, he afterwards gave up all hope of being able to destroy her. Then the dragon was angry against the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ;" (1) that is to say, ceasing to persecute the holy solitaries, and despising them, he turned his rage, or continued it, against the Christians who remained mixed up with the world. All this, as we have said, had been foreshown during the sounding of the sixth trumpet; the Church in the wilderness being signified by the temple spoken of in this prophecy, and the Christians living in the world being signified by the court of the temple. It had been said to St. John: "Arise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that adore therein. But the court that is without the temple, cast out, and measure it not; because it is given unto the gentiles, and the holy city they shall tread underfoot for two-and-forty months," (2) *i.e.*, the three years and a half assigned to the onslaught made by the two beasts.

818. Now, just as this most dire and crafty persecution has reached its height, the two prophets are seen to rise again and to go up to heaven, and simultaneously with this there is a frightful earthquake which kills seven thousand men, and so terrifies the rest, that they give glory to the God of heaven. (3) The city founded by the devil in this our planet does not fall as yet.

819. Nevertheless, the terror struck into men's hearts prepares the way for the advent of the kingdom of

(1) Apoc. v. 17. (2) *Ibid.* xi. 1, 2.
(3) *Ibid.* v. 13.

Christ on this earth. But before that, St. John is shown the glory of those holy solitaries, who, as we have said, escaping from a world so sunk in corruption, had observed a life of perfect continence. Of them it is said: "These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth there was found no lie; for they are without spot before the throne of God." (1)

820. Then the true faith is preached with success to the great ones of the world—described as they who "sit upon the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people," (2) by an angel, who is probably some great pontiff; and the Gospel, now resplendent with so many victories, is clearly shown to be eternal; while at the same time the future judgment, which must complete the work of Divine Providence, now already made manifest, is intimated to men thus: "Fear the Lord and give Him honour, because the hour of His judgment is come; and adore ye Him that made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters." (3)

821. Another angel follows, another holy preacher, who predicts the fall of Babylon; and again a third, who announces the punishment of those who have adored the beast or his image, and have received his character on their forehead or on their hands. (4)

822. The earthquake and the preaching of these three angels restrains in some measure the impious fury of Babylon; nevertheless the great majority of

(1) Apoc. xiv. 4, 5.
(2) *Ibid.* v. 6.
(3) *Ibid.* xiv. 7.
(4) *Ibid.* v. 8–11.

mankind give no heed to the preachers and refuse to do penance; nay, they go on revelling in iniquity, as Christ foretold, when He said that the charity of many will grow cold, and that at His coming He will hardly find faith on the earth. (1)

The fall of Babylon is therefore reserved till the coming of Christ, the King, who descends to the earth on which the dragon had been cast, in order to overthrow him completely. This will be the fulfilment of what the two angels said to the Apostles as they looked on Christ ascending into heaven. "This JESUS Who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven," (2) that is, caught up into a cloud. Hence, describing his vision of this period, St. John says: "And I saw, and beheld a white cloud; and upon the cloud, one sitting like to the Son of man, having on His head a crown of gold" (the symbol of royal dignity), "and in His hand a sharp sickle." (3) This, however, seems to be as yet a peaceable descent of Christ and visible only to a few saints, as was His ascension to heaven from Mount Olivet; therefore it is not that public and solemn coming which will be terrible to behold. It seems likewise that from that day forth Christ will appear frequently to His faithful ones, as was the case in the forty days after His resurrection. During that period He will also come suddenly to take many of the just to heaven, by means of a happy death, made holy and even delightful by His own visible presence. (4) These just ones are signified by the ripe corn which the Son of Man reaps with His sickle. But a still greater number of

(1) Matt. xxiv.—Mark xiii.—Luke xvii., xxi.
(2) Acts i. 11. (3) Apoc. xiv. 14.
(4) Matt. xxiv. 42–51; xxv. 1–46.

the wicked, signified by the bunches of grapes gathered from the whole earth, not by Christ Himself, but by His ministering angel, shall perish by the sword in the most deadly wars waged between the two cities of God and the devil. "And the angel thrust in his sharp sickle into the earth, and gathered the vineyard of the earth, and cast it into the great press of the wrath of God. And the press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the press up to the horses' bridles for a thousand and six hundred furlongs." (1) To this follows the new song intoned in honour of their King by the just safely taken up to heaven: "Great and wonderful are Thy works, O Lord God Almighty: just and true are Thy ways, O King of ages, etc.," (2) the whole of this song being directed to celebrate the most wise and most excellent design of God's Providence, successively unfolded in the course of ages. With these most sanguinary wars are associated seven scourges, signified by the seven vials containing the seven plagues called "last," because in them is "filled up the wrath of God." (3) In fact, at the breaking of the seventh vial, Babylon falls, and thereupon the Son of Man appears to His enemies also with great power and majesty. (4)

823. Although the first six plagues were so terrible that all nature was thrown into a state of anguish and consternation, (5) and especially by the sixth, in which there happened a great earthquake such "as hath

(1) Apoc. xiv. 19, 20.
(2) *Ibid.* xv. 13.
(3) Apoc. xv. 1.
(4) Luke xxi. 27.

(5) This convulsion of all nature seems to be referred to by Christ when He says that men shall wither away for fear, "by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves." Luke xxi. 25, 26.

never been since men were on the earth," (1) nevertheless the organized power of evil, in spite of the rude shock it had received, was not humbled. On the contrary, growing all the more enraged, it only thought of uniting all its forces closer than ever in the mad intent of engaging in a decisive struggle with the power of good: "And I saw from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false Prophet" (the beast's minister) "three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are the spirits of devils working signs, and they go forth unto the kings of the whole earth to gather them to battle against the great day of the Almighty God." (2) In consequence of this alliance, offensive and defensive, compassed through messengers sent out by the potentate called the beast, the power of evil will reach the climax of its organized union and strength, according to the word of the Psalmist: "The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ." (3) The devil was permitted to succeed in effecting this, the most formidable of all combinations of the powers of this world, in order that Christ's victory, which is to follow the sounding of the seventh trumpet, might have nothing wanting to the fulness of its glory.

824. Here three whole chapters are devoted to describing the complete overthrow of the power of evil as organized in the mightiest of empires, the capital of which is called Babylon. This great city is represented under the image of a harlot, with whom the kings of the earth commit fornication, and who sits

(1) Apoc. xvi. 18. (2) *Ibid.* xvi. 13, 14.
(3) Ps. ii. 2.

upon the beast, namely, that most wicked potentate who had already persecuted the Church for three years and a half without restraint. The seven heads of the beast (for so they are called) seem to be his seven tributary kings, five of these are contemporaneous, and by the time the great alliance above spoken of is formed, they have already disappeared, perhaps because dethroned by their master to make way for the sixth king. Whether this king simply occupies the place of the fallen ones or is a monarch newly subjugated by the beast, the prophecy does not state. To him succeeds the seventh, whose rule is likewise of short duration. Having ultimately got rid of all these kings, the beast reigns alone. But his empire also comes to an end, either because he is vanquished by tributary princes, or because his own ministers and subjects depose him, or because, from some crafty design, he abdicates of his own accord. He is superseded by ten potentates, who seem to rule jointly by an aristocratic form of government. "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but shall receive power as kings one hour after the beast. These have one design." (1) Nevertheless, the conspiracy which the beast had formed against Christ does not cease; on the contrary, these ten joint rulers, feeling that a great leader is needed to carry on their enterprise, have recourse to the beast, replace him at the head of their armies, and transfer to him their power and authority. (2)

825. But Christ, Who is to crush this formidable confederate army, headed by a commander of extra-

(1) Apoc. xvii. 12, 13. (2) *Ibid.* xvii. 13.

ordinary valour, and to capture the proud city, appears first to such of His faithful servants as are found in Babylon, and dooms her to the flames, bidding them to depart thence and escape from the impending destruction; (1) nay, He summons them to take up arms against that queen of iniquity: "Render to her as she also hath rendered to you; and double unto her double according to her works, in the cup, wherein she hath mingled, mingle ye double unto her." (2) Indeed, that will be the time in which, according to our Lord's words, a man must "sell his coat, and buy a sword." (3) Then also will Jesus Christ reveal to His servants on earth all the things that are about to happen, while those in heaven, seeing that the greatest of all the triumphs of their king is nigh at hand, will burst forth into most joyous alleluias. "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders saying: Alleluia; for the Lord our God the Almighty hath reigned." (4)

826. Then will the conquering king appear, the same who was signified by the white horse seen by St. John at the breaking of the first seal; for the regal power of Christ the Man-God, which was displayed in the resurrection, is the same which will shine forth with dazzling splendour at the end of the world, as the finale, so to speak, of all things. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and with justice doth He judge and fight. And His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many

(1) Apoc. xviii. 4.
(2) *Ibid.* 5.
(3) Luke xxii. 36.
(4) Apoc. xix. 6.

diadems, and He had a name written which no man knoweth but Himself. And He was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, and His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies that are in heaven followed Him on white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword, that with it He may strike the nations. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of God the Almighty. And He hath on His garment and on His thigh written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (1) This is that coming of the Son of God which He Himself announced as having to take place in the sight of all. "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty;" (2) and "As lightning cometh out of the east and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (3) The same is spoken of by St. John in the beginning of the Apocalypse: "Behold He cometh with clouds" (the symbols of His angels), "and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves because of Him." (4) Thus, then, will Christ appear at the head of the army of the saints, arrayed in battle against the confederate hosts commanded by the beast and his subordinate kings. And forthwith "the beast was taken" (perhaps without need of any battle at all), "and with him the false prophet who wrought signs before him, wherewith he seduced them who received the character of the beast, and who

(1) Apoc. xix. 11–16.
(2) Matt. xxiv. 30.
(3) *Ibid.* xxiv. 27.
(4) Apoc. i. 7.

adored his image." (1) Then the ten kings, finding themselves deluded, will turn their anger against Babylon, putting her people to the sword, and consigning her to the flames. (2) And the beast and his false prophet "were cast alive into the pool of fire, burning with brimstone" (a temporal punishment symbolizing the eternal). And the rest were slain by the sword which proceedeth out of the mouth of Him that sitteth upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh." (3)

827. Thus was discomfited the devil, who, after being confounded in his false wisdom, would proudly challenge Christ to a trial of strength. Then all obstacles being removed, Christ, having lawfully conquered in all ways, will be free to restore the kingdom to Israel as predicted by the prophets, and concerning which the Apostles, after the resurrection, asked their Master if that were the time at which he would restore it. By not negativing their question but simply replying: "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power," (4) He implicitly affirmed that the desired restoration would surely come at some future date. This is the temporal kingdom of Jesus Christ described in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, and beginning with the expulsion of the dragon from the earth to be enchained in hell. "And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand

(1) Apoc. xix. 20.
(2) *Ibid.* xvii. 16, 17.
(3) *Ibid.* xix. 20, 21.
(4) Acts i. 7.

years. And he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should no more seduce the nations till the thousand years be finished." (1) Here the saints who had died, or perhaps only the most perfect among them, rise again to sit as judges together with Christ, and to reign with Him on the earth for a thousand years. "And I saw seats; and they sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them, and the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of JESUS and for the word of God, and who had not adored the beast nor his image, nor received his character on their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead lived not, till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." (2) The Psalmist had already prophesied: "The wicked shall not rise again in judgment" (that is to judge), "nor sinners in the council of the just." (3) St. Paul had taught that the order of the resurrection would be as follows: First, Christ, then they that are Christ's, who have believed in His coming, and then the end, namely, the resurrection and the condemnation of the wicked. (4) As therefore when Christ came forth as a conquering king from the tomb, "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose, and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, came into the holy city and appeared to many," (5) so at His second coming, as conquering King and Judge of the world, other saints who were either martyred,

(1) Apoc. xx. 1–3.
(2) *Ibid.* 4, 5.
(3) Ps. i. 5.
(4) 1. Cor. xv. 23, 24.
(5) Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

or, by clinging fast to the way of perfection, emulated the martyrs, shall rise again to exercise judgment and to reign on the earth together with Him. I am well aware that many Catholic writers of high repute think it probable that the saints who arose after the resurrection of Christ died again; but as this is not a point defined by the Church, I own that I cannot bring myself to endorse such an opinion. For, after the resurrection of our Lord, the saints were already admitted to the beatific vision, as may be gathered also from the promise of Christ to the good thief, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." (2) If then they arose, they were in the state of glory. Their apparitions would be enough to prove that their bodies had the properties of glorified bodies; hence it does not seem to me at all credible that death could any longer have dominion over men once placed in such a state. In my opinion this would be derogatory to the power of Christ's resurrection, as well as wholly out of keeping with the ordinary action of God, Whose gifts, as we are often told in Holy Writ, are "without repentance." (3)

Now, the saints, who shall have risen from death after Christ's second coming, will not always be visible, but will shew themselves here and there, as Christ Himself will do, and as He did during the forty days that he remained with His disciples after His resurrection. And although even during Christ's reign of a thousand years, some holy persons will succumb to death, it seems that they will speedily rise again; at least if we apply to this circumstance that difficult passage of the Apostle: "For the Lord

(1) Luke xxiii. 43. (2) Rom. xi. 29.

Himself shall come down from heaven with commandment, and with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead who are in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left" (that is, the faithful then living), "shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ." (1) These words seem clearly to indicate that the bodies, not of Christ only, but also of His saints, will no longer be affected by the laws of gravity, but be perfectly free to appear when and to whom they will. (2)

828. Therefore Christ, and the saints reigning with Him on earth, will at that period direct by their counsels the children of men, who will be no longer seduced by the spirit of error, and will form together one society perfectly constituted and most excellent. Thus also will human society have attained its ideal acme of perfection, through God Himself communing with it as in the terrestrial paradise, but now in a sublimer form, because God will be with men as one of themselves, a God-Man. The opinion which holds that Jerusalem, or perhaps rather Rome, will be the capital of this universal and most happy kingdom, seems quite in harmony with what Zacharias and other prophets foretold of that city, the rebuilding of which, after the captivity, was a mere foreshadowing of far greater things to come.

829. But we are told that when a thousand years of such holiness and happiness have passed away, the dragon will once more be let loose for a short time, and this, I think, may be explained as follows:—

The false *wisdom* of the devil had already been confounded by the wisdom of Christ, and he had been in

(1) 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16. (2) See Appendix A.

consequence cast down from heaven to earth. His blind and unjust *power* had likewise been vanquished by the just power of Christ, and he had been, in consequence, cast from this earth into the abyss. It seemed then that nothing remained for the fiend to oppose to God. But it was not unlikely that he would find a new expedient—I mean hypocrisy. There is nothing absurd in the thought that after a thousand years of confinement in hell's torments, the father of lies should resort to the scheme of feigning repentance, and promising to God that if only set at large he would no longer do any hurt to men. The insincerity of such protestations would, of course, be known to God. Still there are several reasons why God should allow the Angel of Darkness this last trial: first, in order that the father of lies might be made to brook this extreme ignominy of being by facts convicted of hypocrisy and incapability for good; secondly, in order that Christ might not be deprived of this very last glory of having most fully shewn the absolute impotence of the devil and his obstinacy in evil; and finally, in order that new occasions might be afforded to the saints for the exercise of heroic acts of virtue. Thus will the proud spirit be made to bear solemnly and finally the triple confusion arising from proved foolishness, proved impotence, and proved malice—three confusions, it will be seen, corresponding to the three divine attributes glorified in Christ, of Wisdom, of Power, and of Holiness, which attributes are subservient to and are founded on that of GOODNESS.

830. The devil, then, is unchained, and lo! he at once betakes himself to seducing the nations as of yore, and even with greater ardour. "And when the thou-

sand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go forth and seduce the nations which are over the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and shall gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they came upon the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints, and the beloved city." (1) By this trial, another intent was gained. The whole of humanity had been sanctified, all aids for that purpose had been lavished on it by Christ; and yet no sooner is the devil let loose than it falls a victim to his seductions. The most manifest proofs given to it by God of His Goodness, Wisdom and Power, fail in the object of keeping it faithful to Him. How completely does this fact establish the nothingness of human nature when relying on itself! How conclusively does it show that finite beings cannot give to themselves any true good, moral or eudemonological, but that all good must come from God and Christ alone! And what a glory is this for the Infinite! Therefore this conflict also was, like the previous ones, opportune and necessary, that humanity might be thoroughly instructed and humbled, and by the complete humiliation of itself, and the greatest glory thereby given to God, attain that supreme good, moral and eudemonological, to which Christ intended to raise it.

831. Now, how could a sacrilegious perjurer like Satan be dealt with except by summary justice? Accordingly we see the strife quickly terminated by God Himself. "And there came down fire from God out of heaven and devoured them" (the impious men who were beleaguering the holy city), "and the devil

(1) Apoc. xx. 7, 8.

who seduced them was cast into the pool of fire and brimstone, where both the beast and the false prophet shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (1) Here it may be pertinent to remark that when the devil was shut up the first time in the abyss, no mention was made as yet of fire and brimstone. Thus we have three distinct degrees of punishment corresponding to the devil's three defeats. 1st degree, his being thrown down from heaven to earth, corresponding to the discomfiture of his false wisdom; 2nd, his expulsion from the earth and imprisonment in the abyss, corresponding to the discomfiture of his vaunted power; 3rd, the eternal fire, corresponding to the unmasking of his hypocritical feint of goodness. Antecedently to these three overthrows and punishments he was already reprobated and punished on account of his original pride; but his three shameless attempts made the torment of his eternal perdition threefold more intense.

832. After the judgment and condemnation of the devil follows the solemn judgment of mankind. On the appearance of the Judge's throne, the heavens and earth flee away, the latter being converted into human bodies. (2) The wicked also rise again, and in the twinkling of an eye the angels sent forth by Christ gather all men into His presence. The books are opened, and the final sentence is pronounced on every human creature according to his deeds. The heavenly Jerusalem is built up entirely of living stones, each exquisitely perfect both as to form and workmanship; each prepared beforehand and each of infinite value. In this spouse of the Lamb, without spot or

(1) Apoc. xx. 9, 10. (2) *Ibid.* v. 11–13.

wrinkle, decked out in festal attire, exquisitely beautiful, the masterpiece of the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of God, the harvest yielded by all creation, the work of all the ages of the world, is Divine Providence, finally, and with a grandeur surpassing all human thought, justified, exalted, and glorified for evermore.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONTINUATION.—ISSUE OF ANTAGONISM.

833. Let me now sum up what has been said, and make some reflections on the issue of the conflict between the finite and the infinite just described.

We have seen that it is befitting God's attributes that He should raise His creatures to the highest pitch of moral perfection and happiness. This was demonstrated by three arguments.

The first was deduced from the Law of Extremes, which God ever observes in His dealings with created beings.

The second was shewn to be the outcome of the Law of the Greatest Results. Indeed, God could not obtain the greatest results from His creatures, except on the condition of raising them to the summit of moral perfection and happiness; for one degree of moral perfection of a higher standard cannot be compensated for by any accumulation whatsoever of degrees of perfection of a lower standard; since there is as much difference between the different degrees of moral perfection as there is between one species and another. Thus, in the same way that a thousand units of heat, if kept separate, do not produce the effect obtained by ten units acting together; so a lower standard of perfection in a thousand men is of incomparably less worth than a higher standard of perfection even though realized in only one man.

A third argument was drawn as a consequence from the Law of the Complete Realization of the Species; for a given essence is never fully realized, unless its very highest perfection is reached.

834. Now, the highest point of moral perfection in an intelligent creature, consists in the positive and practical knowledge of its Creator, of its own original nothingness, and of its own complete dependence on the Creator, from Whom it derives its every good. This is the only way left open to the creature for arriving at the most intimate knowledge obtainable of God, Whose essential quality it is to embrace all entity, to be the beginning and the end, and, consequently, to be the cause of the existence and perfection of all beings. The acknowledging of one's own nothingness as compared with the Creator, Essential Good, and the cause of all created good, is precisely what constitutes the greatest possible act of humility, and the greatest possible act of adoration and praise.

But the creature cannot be practically acquainted with the Infinite Greatness of God in comparison with itself, except by means of self-abnegation, that is, by means of an act whereby it actually prefers the Creator to whatever pleasurable feeling it can derive from its own limited excellence.

It was, therefore, necessary that God should afford creatures a suitable opportunity of renouncing themselves in order to bring about the greater exaltation of their Maker. Such opportunity He gave both to angels and men.

Angels, as being active and purely spiritual beings, have, by their very constitution, a sentiment of excellence and superiority over men; God gave them the

opportunity of renouncing this sentiment by adoring deified humanity, the Man-God—CHRIST.

Men, passive and composite, take a natural delight in animal gratifications; God gave them the opportunity of renouncing this delight by abstaining from a fruit "good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold." (1)

In both instances, by obeying, they would have paid God the homage that was His due, and would themselves, at the same time, have advanced in virtue. (2)

But was the moral perfection they might thus have acquired, the greatest possible?

Not so; for the abasement required of the angels was not sufficient to make them practically recognize to its full extent the nothingness of the angelic nature when compared with God. Thus, in like manner, the act of mortification man was called upon to make, was not a complete sacrifice of human nature in honour of the Creator, and could not beget in man a full, practical, and meritorious knowledge of the utter nothingness of human nature in comparison with its Maker.

The angel could not recognize practically and meritoriously all the defectibility of his nature, unless he beheld it precipitated into the lowest depths of wickedness. So, too, man could not practically and meritoriously recognize all the defectibility of human nature, without seeing it infected with all the vice of which it was capable.

Such being the case, God might so have ordained that both angel and man should be proof against

(1) Gen. iii. 6.

(2) See St Augustine, *De Civit. Dei*, Bk. xix., ch. 13.

temptation. But His Infinite Goodness intervened, and entering into consultation with His Wisdom, if the expression may be allowed, proposed the question: Will angels and men be enabled to yield greater fruits of virtue by allowing them to fall, than by efficaciously succouring them to remain faithful?

The decision was this:—

First, that a greater amount of fruit would be yielded by allowing a portion of the angels to fall, in order that the angelic nature, possessed by those who did not fall in common with those who fell, might have an experimental knowledge of itself, that is to say, might know what depravity its own nature was susceptible of, and might exercise a complete act of self-abasement before its Creator, by acknowledging the fact that its own safety and salvation depended entirely on Him and His gratuitous election, and might at the same time gain the merit of detesting and combating evil more actively than ever. Now, the moral perfection of the faithful angels, enhanced by these sublime sentiments, acquired in God's eyes a value far surpassing the salvation of all the angels that were lost.

Secondly, that more abundant fruits would be obtained by allowing man to fall, and all his posterity to be blighted, with the exception of a solitary maid, destined to be Mother of the Redeemer, in order that redeemed human nature might likewise practically recognize the depravity it is capable of, and into which it had sunk of its own accord, and might extol its Creator as its only hope and refuge, and the source of all its good.

835. Furthermore, the redemption of mankind was

not only a boon to themselves, but redounded to the benefit of the angels, whose moral perfection and consequent happiness was immeasurably increased on account of man's redemption. Several reasons may be assigned for this statement.

In the first place, the loss or salvation, the preservation or destruction of human nature having become a subject of contention between hell and the Almighty, it is plain that the discomfiture of Satan afforded the good angels a fresh and more lively experimental knowledge of the Greatness, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as well as of the comparative powerlessness, folly, and wickedness of their own nature. Hence, they had full scope for giving endless praise to their Lord, humbling themselves meanwhile in His presence in the intimate conviction of their own nullity.

836. In the second place, they had occasion to display their zeal in the strife with Satan, and hence, as they were free co-operators and secondary causes, to become sharers in God's victory, and in the glory consequent upon the same.

837. In the third place, they were able to exercise charity towards men, whose guardians and defenders they became.

838. In the fourth place, they were able to adore the Humanity of Christ, to minister to it, and, through the reverence due to Christ, to minister also to those who possess Christ within themselves. This was an exercise of supernatural humility, by which a being of more elevated nature rightly lowers itself beneath one of an incomparably inferior order, for the reason that the latter is united to the Creator.

839. In the fifth place, they who first practised

faith in the words of God by believing in the mystery of the Incarnation, later on discovered in this mystery an abyss of light, from which they derived a wonderful increase of wisdom while pondering on the Wisdom and Goodness of God which shine forth beyond all measure in that great mystery.

840. In the sixth place, their love of JESUS CHRIST and their beholding Him added immensely to their happiness; for it is written that upon Him "the Angels desire to look." (1)

841. Thus God disposed all creation with the aim of accumulating in intelligent creatures the greatest quantity of moral perfection and of bliss; both of which consisted in a knowledge of their Creator at once experimental and practical, a knowledge, that is to say, accompanied by the assent of the will, love, and deeds. Such a knowledge could not be acquired but by a kind of contrast between creatures and their Creator, which should clearly bring out that they are a mere nothing, and that He is their ALL; and this contrast could not be fully brought out otherwise than by Antagonism between the finite and the Infinite.

842. I have stated that the knowledge of the Creator which was to perfect the creature could only be the result of the experimental contrast between themselves and their Maker; for the creature, in fact, by means of perception, can gain experimental knowledge only of itself and of what it feels in itself, and whenever what it feels is infinite, this infinite is subjected in consequence to a sort of limitation, so that we can apply to our case that adage of the

(1) 1 Peter i. 12.

Schoolmen, *quidquid recipitur ad instar recipientis recipitur*. It was fitting, therefore, that the creature should acquire an experimental knowledge of the Grandeur, the Power, the Wisdom, the Goodness of its Creator. It was fitting that in this way it should be able to form an estimate, on the one hand, of its own deficiency, and, on the other, of the never-failing greatness of the Creator, taking itself, as it were, as the standard of worth, and arguing after this fashion: "I have thus much of being, but my being is altogether limited; therefore, the being I have is as nothing to that Being Who is infinite."

But how could the creature arrive at such a conclusion by way of experience? The experience of a real annihilation is an impossibility; for, if the creature came to be actually annihilated, it could learn no lesson from this fact, whereas God requires created beings to yield the greatest possible fruit, nay, rather to gather that fruit from the knowledge of their own original nothingness. The creature, therefore, could only acquire a vivid and practical persuasion of its own nothingness, of its own insufficiency in everything for which it was made and after which it longs, by falling short of all that it aims at, and by finding itself incapable of attaining that end, the non-attainment of which must render its very existence profitless. Created beings were made for righteousness and moral perfection: it was necessary that they should experience its loss. They were framed for happiness; it was requisite they should experience the extreme of suffering. As the angelic nature is simple, it could not be destroyed but by annihilation. Human nature being composite, could be destroyed, as such, without

its component parts being annihilated. The soul separated from its body would still remain capable of intelligence, a subject and a subsistent person: the dolorous experience therefore best fitted to human nature was that of death.

843. But since such bitter experiences of its own insufficiency were not designed by God for the creature's ruin, but, on the contrary, for its greater good; it remained for the spontaneous and gratuitous Goodness of God to stretch out His hand to the creature that had been found altogether unable to uphold itself, and to lift it up from the lowest depths of misery to the very summit of perfection and happiness, to the end that the creature, after being made acquainted with itself, and with the result of its own deeds, might come to know its Creator and what was wrought by Him in its behalf.

844. Now, the angelic nature acquired this two-fold knowledge at one and the same time. For, while one portion of the angels gave proof of their own natural liability to fail, the rest, in whom the same nature is realized, experienced the action of the Creator Who enlightened and upheld them, and, at the same time, from the sad fate of their companions, perceived what they themselves were and might have been.

845. Human nature, however, acquired possession of this twofold knowledge at different times, man's prevarication having first taken place, and later on his redemption and sanctification; first death, afterwards the resurrection.

846. Limiting ourselves on this point to the consideration of mankind in particular, we may observe that there were two crowning works which God

wrought in favour of fallen man, and by means of which He gave proof of His own Goodness, Wisdom and Power :—

1st. One was relative to moral evil, and consisted in redemption from sin and in sanctification. This was the fruit of the victory Christ won over sin, and it continues to have its effect in His faithful followers through all ages unto the end of the world. In this splendid victory God associated man with Himself; for the Sacred Humanity of Our Lord JESUS Christ conquered in company with the Word; and the triumph of the human nature of Christ was the triumph of the whole of humanity. Nevertheless, this triumph is not due to man's own valour and strength but to God alone, for it was God Who came to man's help, rescued him from sin, and rendered him capable of performing works of justice. Hence, St. Paul writes: "But now without the law"—that is, not by virtue of the Mosaic law—"the justice of God is made manifest; being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the justice of God by faith of JESUS Christ,"—that is, not by any confidence man can place in his own power to do good, for in that he failed—"unto all and upon all them that believe in Him: for there is no distinction. For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God,"—that is, God's gratuitous Goodness, in which His glory and His victory over finite creatures are most clearly manifested :—"being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ JESUS." (1)

847. 2nd. The other work of God, relating to eudemonological evil, was the saving man from des-

(1) Rom. iii. 21–24.

truction. This constitutes the victory which Christ gained over death, and which will be consummated at the final resurrection, according to the words of the Apostle:—"The enemy death shall be destroyed last. For He hath put all things under His feet. And whereas He saith: All things are put under Him, undoubtedly, He is excepted, who put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then the Son also Himself" (as man) "shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." (1)

Be it observed that in this passage St. Paul asserts that it was God Who subdued all things to Christ, and that in the end even Christ, as man, shall be subject to God, as to the only one recognized fountain-head of all good; in order that in the GLORY OF GOD ALONE, the end of the universe, all may be consummated; and all the Saints, both Head and members, may from this exalted glory derive their sanctification and their bliss.

848. A fact that calls for our careful attention is, that Christ's victory over death is in a special manner extolled in Holy Writ. It is, in truth, a decisive victory, for, by death human nature is destroyed, and it was precisely on this destruction that the enemy of all good was fully intent. The destruction of so great a work of God would have cast a slur on its Creator, making it almost appear that what He does can be undone by some other power. And human nature, if destroyed, would no longer have been able either to merit, or to praise its Maker, or to yield any fruit to

(1) 1 Cor. xv. 26-28.

Him. True it is that the soul would still have remained immortal; but the soul alone does not constitute human nature in its entirety, but only an element of human nature, which survives the disunion of the parts. From the very depths of human nature, then, proceed those words of the Psalmist:—"Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead? or shall physicians raise to life, and give praise to thee? Shall any one in the sepulchre declare Thy mercy: and Thy truth in destruction? Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark, and Thy justice in the land of forgetfulness?" (1)

It may be here observed that death is often alluded to in Scripture as darkness, and the land of oblivion, because by death man, if dependent solely on his natural constitution, would forget all knowledge acquired in this life. It was, therefore, with sentiments prompted by human nature, that the Israelites sang:—"The heaven of heavens is the Lord's; but the earth He has given to the children of men. The dead shall not praise Thee, O Lord: nor any of them that go down to hell. But we that live bless the Lord: from this time now and for ever." (2) In this passage we are given to understand that it is naturally beyond our comprehension how men can dwell in heaven, the habitation of God, Who is a pure spirit, and of the other pure spirits. This was a profound mystery to nature, and impenetrable to the multitude of the Israelites themselves. As, therefore, after this great mystery had been revealed, Christ taught that the greatest act of love is that by which a man lays down his own life; so in the olden time the greatest act of

(1) Ps. lxxxvii. 11-13. (2) Ps. cxiii. 16-18. See also Baruch ii. 17.

faith and hope was that by which a man yielded up his life at the word of God. Such was the sacrifice of Abraham. Such was the protest of Job, "Although He should kill me I will trust in Him." (1) Such likewise was that of the Psalmist, "For Thy mercy is better than lives ; Thee my lips shall praise." (2)

From not understanding how the soul could live without the body, sprang the error of the Sadducees. Hence Christ, when confuting them, does not undertake to explain to them that the soul would exist even though stript of the body,—that would not have sufficed ; but He convinces them with the word of God, called in Scripture the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob ; a phrase which denotes that those patriarchs were alive, God not being "the God of the dead, but of the living." (3) In truth, the objection of the Sadducees bore upon the *resurrection*, and not upon the mere *subsistence of the soul*, for it was difficult to see how the soul could live of an operative life unless there were a resurrection. Neither does Christ explain to the Sadducees that when the souls of the just have been separated from their bodies, a mysterious communication with the glorified body of Christ will more than compensate the loss of their bodily life, since the text of Holy Writ was plain enough to confute their error, and they themselves were not capable of being instructed in higher truths. He did not fail, however, to unfold the secret to His disciples, when He informed them that He was about to give them His own flesh instead of "the life of the world ;" (4) and when He told Martha that He was

(1) Job xiii. 15.
(2) Ps. lxii. 4.
(3) Matt. xxii. 32.
(4) John vi. 52

"the resurrection and the life."(1) For, as there are two deaths, so there are two resurrections. In fact, the soul of the believer, even before he has his body restored to him in the final resurrection, at the very moment in which this earthly life becomes extinct, is drawn into contact with the Sacred Humanity of JESUS Christ, Who comes, according to the words of the gospel, to receive him on his death-bed.

And as Christ by uniting to Himself the soul of the deceased becomes its *resurrection*, so He continues to be its true *life* afterwards, because He never separates Himself from that soul for all eternity. For this reason St. Paul speaks of a habitation that the soul receives after the present life instead of the habitation of its own body in which it previously dwelt:—"We know, if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven," (2) which supplies for the instrumentality of the body.

849. *Sin* conquered, *Hell* is likewise conquered; and *death* being conquered together with sin, an entrance may be effected into the eternal life of heaven, the final state for which humanity is destined.

Still, a part of mankind, as also a part of the angels is lost,—the sad effect of the creature's free-will, but necessary, nevertheless, to the obtaining of the greatest amount of good, in consequence of that law of wisdom, which requires that the greatest results must be obtained with the least expenditure. For, if this evil had not been allowed by Divine Wisdom, no

(1) John xi. 25. (2) II Cor. v. 1.

room would have been left for that kind of good which angelic and human nature is capable of bringing forth in a state of perdition. To understand this we may reflect :

1st. That the reprobate are an experimental demonstration which the just have continually under their eyes, proving the nothingness of their own nature, and the Infinite Goodness of God Who has elected them ;

2ndly. That they render possible a just superiority and dominion, which God's holy and faithful servants enjoy and exercise over His wicked and rebel subjects ;

3rdly. That they afford a palpable proof of the deformity of sin, thereby rendering more manifest the beauty of virtue in the eyes of all intelligent creatures ;

4thly. That they demonstrate the high and incontestable claims of Eternal Justice, which by inevitable punishment, proportioned to the crime committed, restores the equilibrium between moral and eudemonological good, between moral and eudemonological evil,—a new experimental method of manifesting to all creatures the Greatness and Holiness of God.

850. All these reasons, powerful as they are, cannot be fully grasped, unless one understands aright the truth above laid down, that every created intelligence needs to be made acquainted with the defectibility of the finite and the indefectibility of the infinite by actual experience, in order that its cognition may be life-giving and productive of great actions. This is a necessity springing from the *limitation* of the finite, which God Himself cannot

take away without rendering it infinite; and that would involve an absurdity. Thus does the Apostle explain the mystery of election and reprobation, telling us that by the latter God wished "to SHEW His wrath, and to MAKE His power KNOWN," and by the former to "SHEW the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory." (1) To whom did He wish to *shew* the extent both of His Justice and of His Mercy? To the whole of the angelic and human nature. And why? In order that knowing His attributes, making use of this knowledge to magnify Him, both men and angels might enhance their own perfection and happiness, the consummation of which consists precisely in this knowledge, this praise, given to the Creator. And in what individuals did the creature reach such a height of perfection and happiness? In those who by cleaving to virtue are styled on that account by St. Paul "vessels of mercy." But could not God have manifested these attributes of His to creatures without their effects being made visible in creatures? No. And why? Not assuredly through want of power on the part of God, but through the creature's own insufficiency and limitation. This doctrine, too, St. Paul confirms with the authority of the Old Testament. In fact, what is the reason assigned by Scripture for God's inflicting so many scourges on the Egyptians? It is clearly and repeatedly stated that God, by chastising Pharaoh, intended to give a striking lesson to all nations, to wit, that they might know His Power, and so might learn to stand in dread of His name. Thus indeed did

(1) Rom. ix. 22, 23

Moses, by God's own order, speak to Pharaoh: "Therefore have I raised thee, that I may show my power in thee, and My name may be spoken of throughout all the earth." (1) Nay, God even wished to teach Pharaoh himself a lesson by means of the very scourges with which He afflicted him, had not that monarch become hardened in obstinacy. Wherefore He bade Moses to say to him: "I will at this time send all my plagues upon thy heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people: that thou mayest know there is none like me in all the earth." (2) So too the Israelites had, in their own experience of the privileges wrought for them in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the conquest of Chanaan, a continual theme for praising the Greatness of God.

In exactly a similar manner does the whole of Christendom exalt God for so many manifestations of His attributes made known by means of His chastisements and blessings; and these same events will afford the blessed in heaven an everlasting subject of eternal praise.

It was requisite, to repeat this truth once more, that God should in a complete manner reveal His Justice and Goodness in the works of His hands, in order that the knowledge of these divine attributes might sink so deep into the minds and hearts of creatures as efficaciously to arouse in them corresponding sentiments and actions. The same wholesome result is obtained by the terrible justice which is meted out to the lost in the unquenchable flames of hell. This truth suggested to St. Augustine those words of his which sum up the whole of the preceding

1) Exod. ix. 16. (2) Exod. ix. 14.

argument: "If every one were saved, the penalty justly due to sin WOULD REMAIN UNKNOWN; if no one, the benefits freely bestowed by grace." (1)

(1) *Si omnis homo liberaretur, utique lateret quid peccatis per justitiam debeatur: si nemo, quid gratia largiretur.* (*Epist.* cxciv., n. 5).—No less worthy of perusal are the words of the Holy Doctor which precede those just quoted, and are quite to the point: *Quod autem personarum acceptorem Deum se credere existimant, si credant quod sine ullis præcedentibus meritis, cujus vult miseretur, et quos dignatur vocat, et quem vult religiosum facit: parum attendunt, quod debita reddatur pœna damnato, indebita gratia liberato, ut nec ille se indignum queratur nec dignum se iste glorietur, atque ibi potius acceptionem nullam fieri personarum, ubi una eademque massa damnationis et offensionis involvit* UT LIBERATUS DE NON LIBERATO DISCAT, QUOD ETIAM SIBI SUPPLICIUM CONVENIRET, NISI GRATIA SUBVENIRET. (n. 4.)

CHAPTER XXX.

CONTINUATION.—FORCES GOD BRINGS TOGETHER IN THE CONFLICT.

851. The universe, with all that happens in it, depends on God as its first cause. But God orders the events necessary for the fulfilment of His supremely good and eternal designs, for giving them feature and form, by acting now as a positive cause, now as a negative cause. As a positive cause He produces good, as a negative cause He excludes the unnecessary, permits the evil of wilful sin, determines the evil of suffering. All that happens in the universe in relation to the great design of God, is either good or evil. From the mixture of good and evil and from the combat between them there results the most wonderful and complete victory of good over evil, and the triumph of God, Who is the Essential Good, and also the ultimate perfection of the creature, the perennial source of which is the knowledge of this triumph. Therefore it is that the Scripture says that God has poured wisdom out upon all His works. (1)

852. First we will consider how the divine operations are directed by Wisdom when God works as a *positive cause*, and we will shew the different laws

(1) *Et effudit illam super omnia opera sua, et super omnem carnem secundum datum suum, et præbuit illam diligentibus se.* (Eccles. i. 10.) Wisdom is poured upon all the works of God; but only those who love Him properly, possess it, making use of it to great advantage.

which govern this operation. Then we will pass on to consider how the same Wisdom disposes created natures when He remains as a *negative cause*, and what a conflict ensues between the deficient effects of these natures, which deficiency constitutes evil—and their full and completed effects—which fulness and completeness constitute good. But the inaccessible height and the inexhaustible fecundity of the subject forbid us to pass on till we have reverted to some considerations regarding the nature of the forces which God places in the field in the mortal battle between good and evil, which have not yet been sufficiently elaborated.

853. We have seen that God employs His Wisdom in the combat, and does not exhibit His Power till after He has conquered legitimately with the peaceful weapons of reason, and this Wisdom He displays in order to do justice to the conqueror and the conquered, decreeing triumph to the first, and punishment to the second. This truth is so important that we must treat it more at large.

What is meant by saying God fights against the adversaries of good not with His Power, but with His Wisdom? How can Wisdom alone succeed against all the real strength which the wicked—always violent—bring into the field?

It means that God acts in such a way that the battle is carried on only by secondary causes. Himself giving existence, nature, strength, to them—that is, to the good as well as to the wicked, with equal impartiality. As we have seen, He in the beginning created all natures, did good to all—the free, the intelligent; He established universal laws for good and for evil, laws

which regulate the natural as well as the supernatural order, and to which all beings were to be equally subject; He maintained the constant subordination and concatenation of causes, and thus sent them forth to their work. To create natures was certainly a work of His Power, and there was in this no combat. This Power did no more than produce and mature beings which were afterwards left to their own will and to their native virtues. When any of these stray away from justice and thus engage in the first battles against it and those who maintain it, He does not interfere in favour of these last by annihilating the former, or by any other act of Divine Power which He might exercise; on the contrary, He maintains the strength of the bad as well as that of the good; He leaves them to fight among themselves and wills that the victory should be gained as the spontaneous consequence of the valour of the combatants and of the action of secondary causes.

854. But how is it that we say He conquers by His Wisdom? In this manner: it was the *Divine Power* that brought contingent natures out of nothing and maintains them and their respective laws, but it was *Wisdom* that determined the *manner* and *order* of these natures; the *manner* by fixing the quantity, the weight, the number, the measure of species and individuals, time, space, etc.; then the *order* connecting them and blending them together, placing them in certain determinate relations with each other and giving them suitable spheres of action. Now, this *manner* and this *order*, according to which they were chosen, disposed, and distributed, had been determined and decreed by Infinite Wisdom, foreseeing all, and

therefore in the first arrangement of them placing the seeds of all future events, the relations with each other which would be interwoven in succession, and that harmony among them from which in the end of time would arise the complex result of the greatest good—the most stupendous victory of good over evil. Thus this victory had been foreseen and decided on from the beginning by a simple act of wisdom which alone could determine it, since power had no further part in it than to cause the existence of the combatants. The victory itself is only an *order*, an order of substances and acts, not the *substances* themselves or their acts as such. (1) Order is then the object of wisdom, substances and their acts, of power. Hence, whenever the Scripture says that all creatures always execute the Divine Will, it attributes such obedience to the virtue of the first creative act by which they had subsistence and order, and in it the precept, so to speak, of what they were to do in future: "For He *spoke*, and they were made," is an utterance of the Word that gives them existence; "He *commanded*, and they were created," is a command, an act of Wisdom that harmonizes them with each other; "He hath established them for ever, and for ages of ages (producing the substance); He hath *made a decree* (placing them in suitable order) and it shall not pass away." (2)

855. It is evident to every thoughtful mind how the issue of human things depends on the series and

(1) Hence St. Thomas aptly says that *Fatum dicitur dispositio non quæ est in genere qualitatis, sed secundum quod dispositio designat ordinem qui non est substantia sed relatio*, S. p. I., q. cxvi., art. 2, ad 3.

(2) Ps. cxlviii. 4, 5.

concatenation of events. Hence the common proverb, "Make me a prophet, and I will make you rich." Hence also the origin of the ancient common belief, even of poets and philosophers, in that *fate* the power of which was superior to that of Jove himself; an error manifestly arising from the observation of the constant course of secondary causes, which, we may almost say, the Supreme Being respects as that which is His own first law and will, but which the grossness of the human mind regarded as a proof that this course was independent of Divine Power. The Mahometans, instead of considering fate as the infrangible connection of secondary causes, make it consist in the necessity of single events, which they attribute to the decretory will of God. They thus fall into the absurdity of admitting that every event would equally occur whether man gave cause for it or not, or even removed the cause, and repeat the sophism which the ancient philosophers fittingly denominated "the sluggard's argument," *ἀργὸς λόγος*. (1) This sophism sways the minds of those who, observing that consequences often follow from events in spite of the will of man and his provisions against them, and considering this necessity only, do not bear in mind that events are nevertheless always connected with their causes, so that if they are *fated*, the causes of them must be *fated* along with them, as Chrysippus would have it. (2) In our times the study of so long a history as that of the life of the human race, which has been unfolding for thousands of years, has opened the eyes of men to see clearly enough the invincible power of the enchainment of innumerable causes to produce effects

(1) Cicero calls it *ignava ratio*, *De Fato*, xii. (2) Cicero, *De Fato*, xiii.

ST. ALBERTUS COLLEGE LIBRARY

often inevitable, and often beyond the power of man to foresee, though clearly foreseen and predisposed by the First Author of this concatenation. The result has been that in our day, stumbling against the error of the gentile fate, we have seen a school arise of *fatalist historians.*

856. But although there is error and ignorance in such a system, yet it is not the less true that the complex issue of events composed of a long and complicated series of causes, and of effects which become causes in their turn, in great measure subtracts from the power of the individual man, and often even from that of the masses, whose foresight is vain because they do not see far enough, nor provide in time against that which either is insensibly going on or happens unexpectedly, and which they themselves are the means of bringing about. Divine Wisdom, on the contrary, which has foreseen everything and disposed all causes from the beginning according to His high intent, obtains that the succession of things shall always issue in the end He wills, and in the great victory which He has predetermined.

857. With reason then have all men, in all ages, conscious of their own impotence with regard to the final issue of things, recurred to the belief that there was above them a great mysterious power, the lord of all, the dispenser of everything, whether they called it fate or deity, or by any other name, and they felt great need of it and great fear, and so were religious. The impious motto of the Epicureans itself, *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*, is a striking proof of the existence of this immense, recondite supermundane power, upon which all mortals, and the wicked first, in spite of

themselves confess their dependence. And therefore when Thrasymedes, celebrating the feast of Neptune in the island of Pylos, gave Mentor the golden cup in order that he might pass it to Telemachus, and drink in honour of that god, Homer makes him speak thus:

"Deliver to thy friend
The generous juice, that he may also make
Libation; for he, doubtless, seeks in prayer
The Immortals, of whose favour all have need." (1)

And this thought is found continually repeated by all the most ancient writers. Hence again when the gentiles found themselves oppressed and had no refuge, nor strength to resist the violence of the oppressors, they had recourse, as suppliants, to the invisible being, the disposer of the world, with that same spontaneity of nature by which the mind ascends to God by the principle of integration. (2) Not that they believed that they should break the chain of secondary causes, but they understood naturally and instinctively that the issue of events depended entirely on this chain being disposed and woven rather in one way than in another, by a supreme mind, in which alone there existed the sufficient reason why things should be connected and arranged rather in this than in any other manner. Natural sense attached so much importance to this first ordering which mundane things must have from some eternal mind, that it often forgot that it is not upon these secondary causes, as such, that the complex issue of events, happy or unhappy, desirable or to be dreaded, in reality depends. On the contrary this issue depends entirely on the *order of those causes*, and this on

(1) *Odyssey*, III., 57-61. Cowper's Translation.
(2) *See Origin of Ideas*, sec. vi., p. iv., c. ii., a. vii.

the wisdom which had thus disposed them, and under whose dispensation justice could not fail. This intimate persuasion being common in all, is often expressed by the poets as that of mankind, but especially of the miserable and ill-treated, as for example in these verses of Horace:

Regum timendorum in proprios greges,
Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis,
Clari giganteo triumpho,
Cuncta supercilio moventis. (1)

858. What is this power of moving all things attributed to the very eyebrow of Jove? Very properly are all the movements of the world attributed to the eyebrow, that is, to the look of Jove, since the bodily sight signifies the sight of the mind, or rather the knowledge of things, and by only knowing things God establishes and conducts them. It is not, therefore, according to the inward feeling of the gentiles that the power of Jove broke the series of causes, but that by it these causes were created and were disposed as was suitable in order that justice should not perish, but triumph in the end.

859. But we shall understand much better what is the still and hidden strength of the wisdom that disposes the order of causes, if we consider that no single event occurs but as the effect of the very long

(1) "Great King, whose frown doth make
Their crouching vassals quake,
Themselves must own
The mastering sway of Jove, imperial god,
Who from the crash of giants overthrown
Triumphant honours took, and by his nod
Shakes all creation's zone."
(Odes iii., 1. Sir Theodore Martin's Translation.)

and intricate series of causes which have prepared and disposed it. Now, there are events and accidental occurrences, single and instantaneous, of no moment when taken by themselves, on which depends the happiness or unhappiness of a man; one of them alone is often sufficient to cut short his projects, however great, to destroy his power, to render certain what appears to be most unlikely, and entirely to alter the course of his life, and with the course of one man's life is changed that of millions of other men, and even the fate of whole nations. Against these events, planned as it were in secret, what can man do? One of them is death. Who can for certain prolong his life even for a single day? How many accidents there are which may at any moment cut short the thread of life; accidents which cannot be foreseen, but which are simply in the hands of Him Who in His own mind had arranged the order of causes and effects and prescribed to each of these the hour, the minute, in which it is to take place, and punctually to obey the command.

"In fair expanse of soil,
Teeming with rich returns of wine and oil,
His neighbour one outvies;
Another claims to rise
To civic dignities,
Because of ancestry, and noble birth,
Or fame, or proved pre-eminence of worth,
Or troops of clients, clamorous in his cause;
Still Fate doth grimly stand,
And with impartial hand

The lots of lofty and of lowly draws
From that capacious urn,
Whence every name that lives is shaken in its turn."(1)

Let him who can, tell us how different would have been the world's history if Julian, instead of being conquered by the Parthians, had returned victorious from that war, or if Alexander had not been struck by death at Babylon, before having issue, and arranging the government of his conquests, or if Julius Cæsar had lived longer?

860. As the moment in which men shall cease to live upon earth is in the hands of the Wisdom that ordains events, so upon that Wisdom alone depends the preservation or extinction of races. Who can give or take away the succession of a prince? Does it depend on his will? On his valour? On the strength of his armies? And yet the fate of empires is bound up, in great part, with the continuance or extinction of the reigning house. What, let us suppose, would be the present condition of Italy, if the races of so many of her princes had not unexpectedly become extinct? Who knows? God only, Who so ordered it.

861. What we say of the life of man and the duration of races, may be said with equal truth of every great human undertaking. The order of events determines the point at which the undertaking shall come to an end. The heathens saw and confessed this, and one of their number says:

"Debemur morti nos nostraque; sive receptus
Terra Neptunus classes aquilonibus arcet,

(1) Horace, Odes iii., 1.

Regis opus, sterilisve diu palus aptaque remis
Vicinas urbes alit, et grave sentit aratrum:
Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis
Doctus iter melius; MORTALIA FACTA PERIBUNT." (1)

862. These events, the death of individuals, the extinction of families, the certain end of the greatest human works within a time fixed from eternity, by means of a concatenation of causes, are merely examples. The same may be said of every single event, great or little; the time of every one is decreed; man is himself only a means destined for the execution of certain high decrees.

863. It is this very truth, represented in action, which forms the admirable sublimity of the Greek tragedies. In them, fate asserts herself by an infallible issue brought about contrary to all appearances, in spite of all human power and all human prudence, by a series of natural causes wonderfully continued and inevitable. Indeed, the good sense of the ancients blamed the tragic poet, if, by any contrivance he made a god appear upon the scene, because they desired that the Divine Wisdom should be shown forth in the wonderful succession of events, and not that power should be arbitrarily introduced; hence the Horatian precept:

Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit, (2)

given manifestly upon our principle of Sufficient Reason, or the Least Means, which requires that God should not interfere immediately in human affairs

(1) Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 63-68. (2) *Ibid.* 191-2.

except when necessary for effecting some good which could not otherwise be obtained.

864. Here I may be permitted to observe, that whenever a tragedy brings about the disentanglement of a knot by natural means which were yet unforeseen by the wisest men, and striven against by them with all their prudence and with all their might, it will always prove sublime; because it is something sublime to understand, and almost to see with the bodily eyes human affairs conducted by a preternatural, hidden, awe-inspiring and inevitable power, which, however, is in no way violent. But if the issue is, besides this, in favour of justice and of virtue and opposed to injustice, which had already almost prevailed, and to vice, almost triumphant, then the tragedy will not only seem *sublime*, but will also have all the appearance of truth; for this, as we have seen, is the law according to which causes are connected, viz., that the final issue of external events should harmonize with virtuous and good works, and oppose injustice and iniquity; and the contrary to this is the exception, and happens only when the Law of the Least Means requires it. That which happens usually constitutes the likely; that which is not usual but happens by exception, the unlikely. Thus every school of poetry which makes vice triumphant, sins against the law of probability.

865. But here it must be observed that it is not only the ordered series of exterior events which Divine Wisdom has determined, it has also determined the thoughts and affections of men; and this is another powerful arm by which it conquers, causing that all things thus conspire to the issue pre-ordained.

In point of fact, a single thought which arises or does not arise in the mind of a man just at the right moment, is sufficient to change the destiny of the world. Let us question the most famous conquerors; every one of them had a consciousness of being guided by a destiny of this kind. The successful career of Cæsar is celebrated; and yet this ambitious man ignored his own valour, and ascribed his wonderful success to his fortune, that is, to a supernal disposition of events, without which he was unable to account to himself either for his own victories or the course of his life. And who does not remember what this inward sentiment spake even to Attila? The barbarian devastator protested that it was not himself, but something superior to himself, which moved him to his enterprises, and he called himself the "Scourge of God." The terrible Nadir Shah, conqueror of the Indies, declared the same thing. Have we not ourselves heard how the most recent of famous generals—Napoleon I.—judged of his successes? How many times he declared, in wonderment, that victory did not depend on man, but, on the contrary, on a fleeting moment, on a sudden thought which came unsought, quite of itself, at the right instant, and without which everything would have been lost? How often in his really great warlike achievements did he not, as all his predecessors had done, point to his star? How often did he not pay homage to the divinity, and feel and confess the profound sentiment which is contained in the title which Holy Scripture gives to the supreme Being, "The God of hosts."

866. Not only is an instantaneous thought, which passes like a flash of lightning, sufficient to decide

victory or defeat, but all the determinations of man depend on the sudden presence or on the equally sudden cessation of thoughts, the coming and going of which are not in his hands. When the brothers of Joseph, seeing him coming from afar, said: "Let us kill this dreamer, and we shall see of what use are his dreams," they believed that they had their brother's destiny in their hands, and that by their own will they could make the presages of his dreams come to nought; and yet it was not so. And wherefore not? Because their own thoughts and the consequent movement and persuasions of their souls were not in their own hands, although these thoughts and persuasions are in the very soul of man. It happened, in fact, that the thought of killing their brother was, after a short time, changed into the thought that they would sell him, which they believed would be equally available for their design; but they thus co-operated, without knowing it, in the fulfilment of the dream they had despised. It is certain that if the brothers had not persuaded themselves that they were able to prevent the fulfilment of those dreams, and undertaken to nullify them, Joseph would not have had the viceroyalty of Egypt. Yet, being free, they might certainly have killed him just as they were able to sell him, or just as they might have given no thought to the dreams and have taken no heed of them. Of their own free will they preferred the second thought as more merciful than the first; but they could not so have chosen it, had not in the series of their thoughts this second thought succeeded the first.

867. Constantine is a hostage to Galerius; but he obtains permission from the tyrant to return to his

father Constantius Chlorus. If Galerius had upon reflection deferred to grant this permission for a single day, or if the ready thought had not come into the young hero's mind of leaving the court of Nicomedia at once—the very evening the permission was granted, and of killing all the post-horses on his way, he would have been the victim of the cruel and ambitious old man, who on the following day would fain have given chase. It was a case of a thought not occurring to Galerius, and of one occurring to Constantine. On this little, then, depended the triumph of the Cross, the peace of the Church, the extirpation of the tyranny which was so hurtful to the human race, the re-formation of the Roman Empire, the foundation of Constantinople, the Council of Nice, the great works of the Fathers of the IVth Century; in short, the destiny of the world. We are ourselves the offspring of that thought. It is certain that the immense and innumerable consequences of that unseen thought, which at the moment was wanting to Galerius, and of that other which at the moment was not wanting to Constantine, could not be known either to Galerius or to Constantine; and they could not therefore be the objects of their choice; but they were fully known to God, and God alone had chosen them beforehand. Here the passage of Job naturally occurs which thus speaks of God: "He changeth the heart of the princes of the people of the earth, and deceiveth them that they walk in vain where there is no way. They shall grope as in the dark, and not in the light, and he shall make them stagger like men that are drunk." (1)

By God's deceiving bold and impious princes, Job

(1) Job xii. 24, 25. The whole of the context deserves to be attentively studied in connexion with our argument.

means to say, that God permits them to deceive themselves and to confound themselves in their own thoughts and counsels. We read the same elsewhere: "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it;" which Divine power over the thoughts of the great is likened in Scripture to the power that God has of sending down the waters from heaven, of making them descend from the mountains, to distribute them over the face of the earth. (1)

868. Thus as rain and water divided into rivers move on and are further divided in virtue of natural causes previously disposed by God, so the series of human thoughts, and their occurring to the mind at certain determinate moments, as also their departure from it, are the natural effects produced by natural causes—among which causes are included purely spiritual and intellective agencies—but yet such as God Himself had in the beginning ordained and established, or else moved afterwards by the manifestation of His will. Hence if it is considered that all human operations, without exception, begin from the thoughts, and cannot be begun without them, it will clearly be seen that as God is the first orderer and disposer of the thoughts, by this alone He already has in His hand all human events and their infallible issue.

869. I say then that the series of human thoughts has its natural causes, although sometimes evident, sometimes hidden. But I do not say that the origin and the coming and going of thoughts in the human mind depends only either on their natural connexion

(1) Prov. xxi. 1.

and association or on the accidental sensations which man receives from the objects by which he is surrounded, and which are yet ordered by Providence. No doubt these causes have an immense influence over the movements of the human mind. But in causing thoughts either to arise or to disappear from the mind, invisible beings, both good and evil, may, as has been already noticed, also concur. These are likewise secondary causes ordained by God for His infallible designs, and they are indeed working in every part of the universe according to the laws of their own nature. This was always the sentiment of antiquity, even of gentile antiquity, which gave to every man his genius; and it is confirmed by Christian tradition. Hence Boetius writes: "the fatal series of events, or fate, is then fulfilled by the ministry rendered to Divine Providence by spirits, or by the working of the soul, or by the service of all nature, or by the celestial movements of the stars, or by angelic virtue, or by the manifold craft of demons, or by some or all of these together."(1) The same is the teaching also of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas.(2)

870. If, therefore, God permits evil spirits, within certain limits prescribed by His Wisdom, to awaken in the human mind thoughts and designs which tempt or lead to evil, and commits it to His angels to suggest to the human mind thoughts which invite them to good or direct their good undertaking to a happy end, not even thus does He make direct use of His Power. God still employs secondary causes, which follow their own peculiar laws, and their pre-established connexion, and the utmost He does is

(1) De Consol. Lib. iv. p. 6. (2) S. p. I., q. xcvi., art. 2.

to fill the pacific office of teacher and adviser—not to exercise the dominion of a Sovereign Lord.

871. But we must allude to other arms with which the Divine Wisdom vanquishes evil, and procures the triumph of good, in addition to those of the most wise connexion of things, and the interior operations of the soul. One of these consists in the spontaneous effects which are consequent on human malice and on human virtue and sanctity.

872. Malice and iniquity are in themselves a deterioration of the nature and of the person of him whom they pervert, so that these persons themselves, by freely choosing them, degrade and ruin themselves. He then who sins, has already by his sin, without anything more, brought shame and injury upon himself. Hence St. Augustine appropriately remarks of a man who robs, and of him who is robbed, that the former does more injury to himself than to the person whom he robs: *cum ille patiatur damnum pecuniæ, iste innocentiæ.* (1)

873. Besides the moral evil which corrupts what is most excellent in man, there follows in a natural way the evil of suffering; hence the Psalmist: "Behold the sinful man, he hath been in labour with injustice; he hath conceived sorrow and brought forth iniquity, he hath opened a pit and dug it, and he is fallen into the hole he made. His sorrow shall be turned on his own head, and his iniquity shall come down upon his crown."(2) On these words St. Augustine observes that we must not believe that the tranquillity and the ineffable light, which is God, draws from itself wherewith to punish sin, but that it orders sin itself in such

(1) Enarr. in ps. vii., n. 17, (2) Ps. vii. 15–17.

a manner that those very things which were the delight of the sinner, become the instruments of the Lord for his punishment.(1) And this teaching has most ample place in Scripture, which describes the ills which are naturally united with sin, and in the books of moral philosophers of all ages, and daily experience itself affords most luminous testimony to its truth. Therefore, not to be endless, I will merely touch upon the subject.

874. In the first place, sin blinds, more or less, the person who commits and loves it. It not only deprives him of the supernatural light, but it also diminishes the natural, and in this way. The cognitions with which the human mind is furnished are not necessarily the rules by which man acts; but those only are the rules and principles of his actions which man chooses to make such.

Now, if a man acts according to the tenor of what he knows, if in his actions he follows exactly all the knowledge he possesses, as so many rules, his way of acting will be right and just. But the perverse man, who conceives a disorderly affection, takes this for his guide; and hence chooses for the rule of his operations only those cognitions which aid his passions or justify them, or foment them, or minister the means of satisfying them. Thus was the intelligence of the rebel angel obscured by his own pride; that angel knew God and knew himself; but he took for the rule of his actions, only the knowledge of himself. Confining his gaze to himself, to his own excellences, he thus withdrew it from God and the Divine excellence, and grew so proud as to try vainly to persuade himself

(1) Enarr. in ps. vii. 16.

that he should gain the victory over Him Who he yet knew could not be vanquished. And how else did the antediluvian giants act,—those renowned and wicked men whose memory has been preserved among all peoples, whose bold deeds are told of in every mythology, and whose defeat may be read of as well in Horace as in Job?

That there is a power, from which there is no escape, a necessity, a fate, a God, the first cause and ordainer of everything, which rules over all the powers of men, is a truth which has always been felt and confessed by all nations, and of which they were therefore not in ignorance. But they did not take this for the rule of their own actions; but, on the contrary, restricted their attention to the robustness of their own bodies, to the boldness of their own spirit, and blindly persuaded themselves that they could contend with God Himself, and should in some way be able to succeed in the strife. Meanwhile they were quite ignorant that the author of nature had stored up in His reservoirs the waters in which they and their boldness were to perish and be drowned. Hence it is with reason that the Scripture attributes their destruction to their own folly, which thought not of the means of humbling them, possessed by God in the mere forces of nature; as it attributes the safety of Noe to his wisdom, which took for its rule of action the knowledge of that God Who disposes, or rather had already disposed of all things from the beginning. (1)

(1) Wisd. xiv.; Ecclus. xvi.—We have seen that God willed to draw from the humiliation of nature an instruction most salutary for man, teaching him to recognize the Creator as far surpassing in greatness even the immensity

875. There is then this natural difference between the good man and the wicked, that the former is illuminated by the whole of the truth which he knows, whereas the second attaches himself to a small portion of the truth, and voluntarily deprives himself of the light of the other part which, as it is opposed to his passions, he refuses. This is an immense advantage which the first, who is also called in Scripture *wise*, has over the second, who is called *foolish*. For, it is said that the latter walks in darkness and stumbles and falls, and that the former, on the contrary, walks in the light, master of himself, prudent and going directly and securely to his end. How appropriately, too, is it written that the wicked man who narrows, as it were, the limits of his own heart, sets limits to his understanding. *Qui minoratur corde cogitat mihi inania, et vir imprudens et errans cogitat stulta.* (1)

of nature. This necessity, that God, for the supreme advantage of nature that is, of the intelligences He had created—should dispose that all nature should be humbled even to the nothing from which it sprang, arises from this psychological or rather pneumatological law, in other words, from this law of the spiritual nature, that when an intellective being has gifts beyond those of his ordinary state, he is tempted so to fix his understanding and his affections on them as to blind himself to everything beyond them, to all that is above him; in short, to forget the greatness of the Creator from Whom he receives all. This is the reason why science of itself alone, so far from leading man to God, withdraws him from God, and puffs him up, unless it is counterbalanced and informed by charity. Nor is this remark my own; it is made by St. Paul, who observes that God had to oppose a doctrine that teaches and persuades to humility by means of FAITH, which was accounted as folly, to that human SCIENCE which filled men with pride only, and yet was believed to be wisdom: *Nam quia in Dei sapientia, non cognovit mundus per sapientiam* (that is, by the speculations of philosophers and doctors proud of their knowledge) *Deum; placuit Deo per stultitiam prædicationis salvos facere credentes.* 1 Cor. 1. 21.

(1) Ecclus. xvi, 23. On this account St. Paul also says, that if the

876. It must be added that since the wicked man trusts in himself he is incapable of receiving, because he refuses it, any special light from the fountain of sanctity, while the just man who places his trust in God is guided by Providence itself, by means of the angels who raise in him opportune thoughts, and is illuminated immediately by God Himself.

877. Hence the pains to which the wicked subject themselves proceed from two sources: 1st, from their own fault, blinded as they are by themselves; and 2ndly, from things and events not being disposed in accordance with their way of acting.

878. And since every vice has for its real foundation the presumptuous confidence of the creature in its own strength, therefore the Scripture says that "the wicked shall be taken in their own pride," (1) and that "a snare shall entangle the wicked man when he sinneth." (2)

879. Let us consider the state of domestic society among the wicked, how full it is of evils! "Injuries and wrongs will waste riches: and the house that is very rich shall be brought to nothing by pride; so the substance of the proud shall be rooted out. He that buildeth his house at other men's charges is as he that gathereth himself stones to build in the winter. The congregation of sinners is like tow heaped together and the end of them is a flame of fire." (3)

880. Let us consider the evils which injustice and

princes of this world had known Christ, they would not have crucified Him (1 Cor. ii.). And wherefore did they not know Him? Through the ignorance that is produced by sin, and the blindness that comes from the passions.

(1) Ps. lviii. 13. (2) Prov. xxix. 6.

(3) Ecclus. xxi. 5, 9, 10.

iniquity inflict on civil society. "As the judge of the people is himself, so also are his ministers: and what manner of man the ruler of a city is, such also are they that dwell therein. An unwise king shall be the ruin of his people: and cities shall be inhabited through the prudence of the rulers. A kingdom is translated from one people to another, because of injustices, and wrongs, and injuries, and divers deceits. God hath overturned the thrones of proud princes, and hath set up the meek in their stead. God hath made the roots of proud nations to wither, and hath planted the humble among these nations. The Lord hath overthrown the lands of the Gentiles, and hath destroyed them even to the foundation. He hath made some of them to wither away, and hath destroyed them, and hath made the memory of them to cease from the earth." (1)

881. If we consider individuals we see them enervated by vice; every vice brings after it infinite evils. It would take very long to enumerate all the ills produced by sin. Physicians have said a great deal about them, but by no means all that might be said: for it is to sin as to their universal cause, (2) that all diseases may be finally traced. Every wicked man is unhappy because he is profoundly disordered and a punishment to himself; the peace and consolation of the just cannot be told, and surpass all thought of those who have not experienced them. For, if *external* goods and pleasures are sometimes left to the wicked man, nevertheless he is deprived of the enjoyment of them; (3) wherefore, says the Scripture, "He shall not take

(1) Ecclus. x. 2–20.

(2) Upon this subject see Roselly de Lorgue; *La mort avant l'homme.*

(3) See *Society and its Aim* ("La Società ed il suo Fine"), b. iv.

pleasure in his goods," (1) and that eat as he will, "the belly of the wicked is never to be filled." (2)

882. Besides this, there is granted to the just a supernatural light and affection, and certainty, and confidence, which is the germ of their future and complete triumph. Whence, as the apostle says, "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting." (3)

Hence it is that the constancy of the good never fails them; because in that interior happiness which is neither obtained nor lost by violence, they have an inexhaustible store of spiritual strength, which renders them contented and invincible in their meekness, while the wicked, toiling ever along laborious paths, and tired out by the very violence of their efforts, find their strength fail, and are reduced at last, as they themselves often confess, to a state of utter languor and prostration. (4)

883. Considering these things and others which may here be observed, that law will assert itself which we have mentioned as imposed on the wicked, that THEY MAY BEGIN BUT THEY CANNOT END (319). They may begin, because if God did not permit this, there would be no combat, because the issue of the undertaking is the whole, and this God has reserved

(1) Ecclus. xiv. 5. (2) Prov. xiii. 25.

(3) Gal. vi. 8—V. *Essay on Hope* ("Saggio sulla Speranza") b. iii.

(4) "*How often have we said 'this crisis will be the last,' and new ones have arisen. The reason of this is, that we always go to sleep after the victory:* WE PASS SUDDENLY FROM THE EXTREME OF ENERGY TO THE EXTREME OF WEAKNESS." Report of Louchet to the National Commission the 26th Vendémiaire, ann. iv., on the situation of the republic.

for Himself and His people, who, if they are for a moment oppressed and beaten, yet this is not the issue, but the way which precedes and leads to it. Hence: "The desire of the wicked shall perish,"(1) and, "Every work that is corruptible shall fail in the end; and the worker thereof shall go with it,"(2) and, "With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end."(3) "To fear God is the fulness of wisdom,"(4) that is the science of happiness, and not to fear God is the height of folly, because the wicked appear "as a morning cloud (which gives no water), and as the early dew that passes away; as the dust that is driven by the wind, and as the smoke out of the chimney."(5)

But it must be remembered that the deficiency of the wicked, through which they infallibly succumb, is owing to themselves alone; for separating themselves from God they refuse to enjoy the virtue and the strength with which He would have been ready to supply them, and God does nothing more than permit them to withdraw themselves from Him in the manner which they have freely chosen, and He permits it, moved by His Infinite Goodness, which draws from their ill the greatest amount of good to the sum total of His creatures. Hence God Himself says to the Israelites(6) "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me." And Scripture is never tired of giving us to understand in a thousand ways that God is the fount of all good, and that evil happens only through His ceasing to dispense good to them that refuse it. "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living

(1) Ps. cxi. 10.
(2) Ecclus. xiv. 20.
(3) *Ibid.* i. 13.
(4) *Ibid.* i. 20.
(5) Os. xiii. 3.
(6) *Ibid.* xiii. 9.

water, and have digged to themselves cisterns that can hold no water." (1) "Thou hast forsaken the God that begot thee, and hast forgotten the Lord that created thee. (2) The Lord saw, and was moved to wrath: because His own sons and daughters provoked Him. And He said, 'I will hide my face from them, and will consider what their last end shall be;'" (3) which is exactly the failure in its issue of all sinful undertakings. "You have despised all my counsel and neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh at your destruction and will mock when that shall come to you which you have feared." (4) God acts only as a spectator; He is present at the discomfiture of the wicked; they perish of themselves, there is no need for Him to put forth His strength to vanquish; they require no help to perish. "You have left Me"—thus God speaks to Roboam and the princes of Juda when the king of Egypt advanced against Jerusalem—"and I have left you in the hand of Sesac." (5) God does no more than retire, remain inactive, and His enemies are lost of themselves. The Psalmist describes God Who works and then ceases to work thus: "All things that live expect of Thee that Thou give them meat in season. What Thou givest them they shall gather up; when Thou openest Thy hand they shall all be filled with good. But if Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled; Thou shalt take away their breath, and they shall fall and shall return to their dust." (6) Job

(1) Jer. ii. 13.

(2) The wicked man forgets God, that is to say, he does not make the knowledge which he has of God, the rule of his actions; he lacks practical knowledge.

(3) Deut. xxxii. 18–20.

(4) Prov. i. 26.

(5) II Par. xii. 5.

(6) Ps. ciii. 27–29.

describes the natural good things which God permits the wicked to possess, then he instantly raises his mind to Him Who orders the series of secondary causes, saying: "Yet because their good things are not in their hand, may the counsel of the wicked be far from me," (1) and he goes on to describe how many are the accidents by permitting which God despoils them of the fleeting goods which, at first, He had left them. In short, throughout Scripture good things come from God as from a *positive cause;* evils depend upon God as a *negative cause;* God does not produce, He permits; this is all that is needed to prostrate the creature under the burden of evil, because left to its own strength in which it confided.

(1) Job. xxi. 16.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TENTH CONSEQUENCE. THE LAW OF CELERITY IN ACTION.

Omnibus enim mobilibus mobilior est sapientia.

Wis. vii. 24.

884. The Law of the Least Means which presides over the operations of Wisdom, prompted God in the choice of the *beings* of which creation was to be composed, in order to be perfect, and also in the choice of their actions. So that the intention of His creative Goodness could not be obtained except with these two instruments: 1st, beings chosen fit for the proposed end, and harmoniously connected with each other; and 2nd, actions predisposed and combined with marvellous harmony to the same end.

885. We have already seen that in the creation of beings, God, in consequence of this great principle, is governed by the laws of Economy, of Connexion, of Continuity, of Variety and of Excluded Equality.

To determine therefore what should be the *actions* to be pre-established, so that beings, as causes, might attain the great end, essential to the divine operations, of the realization of the greatest good in His creatures, we considered the unity of action of the first cause necessary to the divine design; the different ways in which the first cause by acting or not acting carries it out by means of secondary causes; the nature of the end itself, called in Scripture *the divine glory*; and the necessity for antagonism and a final victory of the

power of good over that of evil, of Infinite Goodness over finite infirmity.

Having seen then, not only what beings, but what actions of these beings it was requisite should be determined and established by the first cause in order that, through them, creation might attain its highest perfection and be adorned with the greatest good, it remains only to observe the *mode* in which these actions themselves were to play their part in the great drama. Now, the nature of this mode is determined by the three laws which it remains for us to unfold: 1st of *Celerity*, 2nd of *Accumulation*, 3rd of *Germ*. Let us begin with the first.

886. It is plain that from the Law of the Least Means there follows as a consequence that of the greatest Celerity of Action; but in order that this thought may be well defined and not misunderstood, some explanation is called for.

887. It is not now a question of a single action of an irrational being subject to necessity. We have seen that if we were treating of this, the celerity of the action would be always determined by the force which produced it (434-446). Only that in this case the force might be more or less impeded by external obstacles, so that it would operate more rapidly and fully in proportion as these were less; hence the principle which determines the greatest effect in such a case is simply that of the greatest facility of action, which becomes the greatest possible when force does not meet with any obstacle in its way, or the least possible that may be.

888. But if it is a question of many actions united for one end, another element enters into the calcula-

tion. The reciprocal position of many agents has its sufficient reason not in their own individual nature, but only in the mind that so disposed them (445). It happens then that the effect that it is intended to obtain does not depend upon the actions of each one, but upon the disposition of all together. It is not a mere physical end, but an intellectual one. Thus geometrical figures would not have any natural reason or design if there were not an intellect which could make use of them in order to facilitate the connexion of its own thoughts. Thus a machine has not merely a physical design different from that of other physical effects, but its value consists in its giving to the intelligence that invented it that result which in framing it it had proposed to obtain. A clock, for example, does not sign the hours for itself, but to the man who invented it to mark off accurately the portions of time as they pass. And yet each of the material agents connected skilfully together for a purpose exerts its own force as far as obstacles permit it, so that the power is a determinate quantity, the effect of which is lessened or varied by reason of obstacles.

889. If, moreover, intellective and moral agents are considered, it will be seen that although they possess a limited and determinate power, yet the quantity which they may put in action is not determined, since they have, so to speak, a certain deposit of force of which they may take and render active more or less at their will. Hence, the quantity of the effect which an intellective moral being can produce, is not determined in the same manner as the effect which can be produced by an irrational being, but the quantity

of the effect alters according to the degree of development of the voluntary activity.

890. Hence it follows, in the first place, that to determine the effect of any particular irrational power, there is no need of any disposing wisdom, its determination resulting from the very nature of that immutable force that produces it. I say this because I have not yet been able to understand the thought of Leibnitz, who supposes that in the laws of the movements of the body there is something arbitrary. Perhaps my inability to grasp his thought may arise from my not having reflected enough on the subject. I confess that I should be very glad to be able to comprehend it, if it be so, because it would imply the acquisition of a beautiful and important truth. But at present, I cannot admit it, because I have not succeeded in understanding it. But even were the judgment of Leibnitz correct, the Law of Celerity, of which we are now treating, would be modified in its application, though it would remain equally true in itself.

891. It follows, in the second place, that the effect which a mind desires to obtain from several inanimate beings, or from several forces acting together may be greater or less according to their connexion, and, therefore, so to determine their connexion and co-operation, that the effect produced may be the greatest, requires the intervention of wisdom.

892. It follows, in the third place, that to obtain the greatest effect from several intellective-moral beings acting together, whether they be alone or mingled with inanimate beings, the intervention of wisdom is doubly necessary, that is, both to hold them

together in a suitable manner, and again to stimulate them to a greater amount of action.

893. These observations premised, it will be easy to understand that one of the conditions for obtaining the greatest effect is the *greatest celerity of action*, and thence, the greatest economy of time.

But to determine opportunely this greatest possible celerity of action, we must have regard to the other conditions of the question; since if one part of a machine accelerates its motion more than is due, either the machine will break, or the effect will not be obtained which was intended, or in a less degree.

The greatest celerity of action then of which I speak must be a *harmonious* celerity, resulting from the combination and adjustment of the movements, and *producing the greatest effect.*

Now, it is evident that if, given certain beings and certain powers of theirs, the same quantity of effect is produced in a shorter time, the combination of these beings and of these forces, has acted with greater celerity, in the sense of which we speak. Now, such is the law that Divine Wisdom of its own nature constantly maintains in giving their measure of movement to all things.

894. This law of the greatest celerity and the greatest possible economy of time, is acknowledged by mankind and is appreciated in things of the most different kinds: in the fine arts and in mechanics, in political undertakings and in the moral character, in the works of man and in those of nature.

For, why do we experience satisfaction in the rapidity with which an epic or a drama proceeds to the unravelling of its plot, or that with which a story is narrated,

or with which a clever orator disposes a series of stringent arguments? Why is brevity of so great a value to style? What gives its beauty to an epigram, a witty remark or a piquant saying? Whence do almost all noble answers derive their marvellous grandeur? What gives rise to the ridiculous? It is always the readiness and celerity by which these different ways of using language and thought attain the end proposed that is appreciated; they say a great deal in few words; they move the mind which listens to them to new and rapid action.

895. Napoleon said that his superiority over other men depended on naught else but the greater celerity of his thought; others arrived at the same conclusions, but he did so before them. Not only celerity of thought, but the celerity of the movements of his armies contributed not a little to make him the victor in so many battles.

896. Again, why do we esteem a nimble and active person, why so highly value a good horse, why railroads and steam engines? These things would not be worth so much but for the celerity with which the effect desired is obtained.

If a mill, a loom, a spinning-wheel, composed of the same quantity and quality of material, and employing the same degree of force, produces in the same time more cloth, more texture, more thread, is it not of more value? Now, the greater value it has depends solely on its producing the same effect in less time.

It may be boldly asserted that all great men became great by the celerity with which they acted; they were great because they did very many or very great things in a short time, by the most decisive and expeditious means.

897. This celerity may be seen by a diligent observer to form the character also of those rising nations which are destined by Providence to a great mission in the world. Lucius Annæus Florus observes of the Romans: "The Roman people, from King Romulus to Cæsar Augustus, did so much in peace and in war in seven hundred years, that when the greatness of the empire is compared with this number of years, it seems as if the time must have been much longer." (1)

Of a character similar to that we have been describing, but much greater than any other, is the celerity of Providence in the government of the world. God created such and such beings, placed them in such an order, and gave them such impulses that this stupendous machine of the universe should succeed in producing the greatest result with the greatest possible speed, that is, in the least possible space of time.

But better to determine this celerity, complex, and relative to the amount produced, we must always recur to the Law of the Least Means on which it depends. Supposing the same amount of good might be obtained by the world in two different series of ages, one twice as long as the other, it would be contrary to the Divine Wisdom to choose the longer series, because in this case, one half of the movements and actions of the world would have been useless.

899. But here there soon arises a most difficult problem of maxima and minima, supposing the total amount of good, and also the duration of the world to be variable. The duration of the action of the means is to be computed as loss, but what proportion has

(1) Epit. Rer. Rom. lib. i. Proem.

this loss with the produce? That is, supposing by way of example that it were a question of giving to the world the longer duration of one age, how much ought the total produce to increase in order that that increase of duration might be justified in the eyes of wisdom? It seems to me that the principle from which the solution of so divine a problem must start ought to be this: Granted that the effects resulting from every being and action are not the result of the action of that being alone, but of its operation in harmonious combination with other beings and with the other acts which constitute the world; if a being or an act in the world might be withdrawn and the world produce the same or even more, that being or that act is superfluous or hurtful; it is not the part of wisdom to produce it. If by the addition of that being or that act, the world, all the consequences both good and evil being calculated, would produce a larger net amount of good, and this the greatest that could be obtained by all possible combinations, in such a case, that being or that act ought to form part of the world. This principle must be applied to all the acts which the world would produce in the additional age taken in their complexity.

900. The principle of celerity, then, being applied to the development of the immense and divine drama of the universe, it is not to be sought either in the physical or the intellectual order of things, but in the moral; to which these two first serve as means.

But in the order of moral goods there must also be distinguished what we may call the *substance* and the *accidents*. The first principle of every wise government is to tend towards the substantial good

and not to waste its power in collecting the accidents and thus diminishing it.(1) Thus for example, a commander who should prefer collecting the spoils left upon the battle-field, to pursuing the enemy and completing his rout, would manifestly lose precious time; his tactics would be quite opposed to the principle of the greatest celerity. This principle of the substance and the accidents is, more than any other, maintained in the government of the world. Providence applies the principle of celerity to the substance of the effect willed, and lets the accidents take their course, regard being had to the limitations of the creature. That those advantages which may be considered accidental are only slowly obtained or are lost, is of no moment if at the same time the substantial good multiplies and accumulates rapidly.

901. The wonderful celerity of the moral development is evident to all who consider these great and supremely important events which find their place in the history of mankind and which contain in truth the sum total of all good. These events succeed each other rapidly; before one is completed another begins and closely follows it; and each one hastens without a moment's delay to arrange itself symmetrically and to attain that condition of finality which the regular order of things requires. This is an accidental and minute perfection which is often sacrificed by the supreme provider to some other substantial good that is to be produced in the world.

(1) This principle was laid down at the beginning of *The Philosophy of Politics* ("Filosofia della politica") as the most general political criterion. See the book entitled: *On the Main Cause, &c.* ("Della sommaria cagione," &c.)

902. Consider then carefully the principal events of the moral order, and what I say will be understood; not one of them has perhaps that termination and that regularity in the accidents which the narrow and limited human mind would have wished to find; I will point out a few.

The diffusion of the Gospel is a substantial event. Now, what surprising celerity there is in its diffusion, as had been predicted, even to the ends of the earth! (1) Even from the very time of the Apostles it would seem that almost all nations had heard the good news. And precisely for this celerity do the holy scriptures give glory to God. "His word runneth swiftly," (2) saith the psalmist; and of the preachers of the gospel and of the saints they say: "They are like arrows from the hand of a strong man;" which strong man is the God-man. (3)

903. When there was question of tearing up the deep roots of idolatry, the shortest method was to call the barbarians of the north, and by their hands to overthrow the Roman empire, of whose political constitution this abomination was a part, as it was also of the customs of the people. The evils which arose from this were as disregarded accidents in the great design, compared with the great good obtained. The sword of Mahomet was itself a rapid instrument to the same end.

904. When there was question of cementing together the Christian world, a collection, we may say, of individuals, and forming of them *Christendom*, the speedy means to which Providence had recourse was

(1) Is. v. 26. (2) Ps. cxlvii. 15.
(3) Ps. cxxvi. 4.

to raise up a Charlmagne and then a Gregory VII., according to the custom of the Eternal, of Whom it is written, *In manu Dei potestas terræ, et utilem rectorem suscitabit* IN TEMPUS *super eam*, (1) and then a Peter the Hermit, and other preachers of the crusades. Many inconveniences were mixed with the employment of such great instruments, but they were accidents. Wisdom heeded them not, and held on her way.

905. Signal punishments are terrible means which God sometimes adopts to break down the greater obstacles which oppose Him, suddenly changing the face of the earth for the better. Holy Scripture, therefore, always unites the attribute of velocity with the Divine chastisements. "I will *quickly* visit you," (2) says God to the Hebrews in Leviticus. "Beware," He says elsewhere, "lest perhaps your heart be deceived, and you perish quickly from the excellent land which the Lord will give you," (3) and this is several times repeated. (4)

906. Is it a question of renewing civil society which has grown old and corrupt? Divine Providence does not dissolve and unloose link by link as it were the bonds that hold it together—that would be a loss of time; but He breaks them violently, that is, He permits that they should be so broken. "The French revolution," says the Count de Maistre, "swallowed up many centuries."

907. The rapidity of His punishments is moreover

(1) Ecclus. x. 4. (2) Lev. xxvi. 16. (3) Deut. xi. 17.

(4) *Ibid.* xxviii. 20. Jos. xxiii. 16. Ps. xxxvi. 2. Joel iii. 4; and in Deut. vii. 10, we read that God is One who repays "forthwith them that hate Him, so as to destroy them, without further delay immediately rendering to them what they deserve."

a mark of the mercy of the Lord. At the same time that they strike most heavily, and inspire men with the greatest terror, they spare many victims by the quickness with which they pass. The persecution of the man of sin, says the Scripture, shall be shortened because of the elect.

908. And why was the life of our Lord upon earth so short? In accordance with the law of celerity it behoved the Man-God to fulfil His celestial mission in the shortest time possible. Not one day of so precious a life was to be spent more than was necessary, not a single instant; every moment of it was numbered.

909. For a similar reason, God shortens the life of great men. Their mission completed, it is enough. Sometimes He does not even permit them to complete the work that they have begun, provided that it has so far advanced that its success is certain, and they are no longer needed. Thomas Aquinas left his *Summa* imperfect; the perfection which was wanting was an accident; all the substance of that great system in which the doctrine of Christianity developed in twelve centuries, received wonderful order and unity, had already been given to the world by his pen. Thus St. Louis died in Africa, St. Gregory VII. in exile. St. Augustine in Hippo, besieged by the Vandals. St. Francis Xavier at the gates of China. Some sow and others reap.

910. If we consider the undertakings, the labours, the works of individual men, eminent for sanctity, they are so many, that they seem to exceed the power of a mortal. Why overwhelm one man with so much work? Why is the harvest so great, the labourers so few? The Law of the Least Means required this, and

especially that of Celerity of action. To produce many great men by means of secondary causes would have been loss of time; time that flies rapidly makes those it can, and unmakes them again; they themselves are swift to do good, fulfilling the counsel of God: *in omnibus operibus tuis esto velox.* (1) Whence also the angels are called in Isaias *swift* ministers of God, and for this reason they are rightly represented with wings. (2)

911. This celerity, however, I repeat does not regard single events, but their combination; it is a harmonious celerity. Besides, instinct is rapid in its action, but the rapidity of instinct is blind; (3) that of wisdom is enlightened; it is a rapidity adapted to its end.

Let us give an example of the harmonious celerity of the works of Providence. God promised the Hebrews that He would exterminate the Chanaanite nations from before them *quickly.* (4) How then was it that He had said previously that He would destroy these nations "by little and little and by degrees?" (5) Both things were true; the destroying them a few at a time fulfilled more quickly the purpose of God to establish the Hebrew people in the promised land, because, had all its original inhabitants been driven from this country, which was too large for the small number of Hebrews to occupy, it would have been ravaged by

(1) Ecclus. xxxi. 27. (2) Is. xviii. 2.

(3) On the *celerity* of operation peculiar to the senses and to instinct, see *La Società ed il suo Fine* ("Society and its Aim"), Bk. III., ch. 5.

(4) "Thou shalt know therefore this day that the Lord thy God Himself will pass over before thee, a devouring and consuming fire, to destroy and extirpate and bring them to nothing before thy face *quickly.*" Deut. ix. 3.

(5) Deut. vii. 22.

wild beasts (1) and overgrown with forests; and therefore the Hebrews, having multiplied, would then have been obliged to spend a great deal of time in cultivating it, and rendering it productive. Some of these accursed peoples were therefore retained as serfs of the chosen people. Besides this, the goodness of God was also in this manner extended to these nations although so completely idolatrous and degraded, that their amendment by means of secondary causes would have been the work of a long time and an expenditure not compensated by the result. The law of celerity, therefore, with which God produces good from mankind, required that they should be destroyed; and yet He suffered them for a while as an additional good, that they might have no excuse. At the same time, however, He foresaw that they would harden their hearts, still more abusing His patience, and thus would merit the extermination which was required for the good of the whole earth and of His own people. But some of them having known the truth through contact with the Hebrew people, were collected, as good and ripened ears of corn, into the granary of the supreme Master. (2)

912. We will give one more example to show the wise celerity which God makes use of in contrast with the blind celerity of sense. The quickness and celerity of human sensuality and ignorance wants to attain

(1) Deut. vii. 22.

(2) "For it was the sentence of the Lord that their hearts should be hardened, and that they should fight against Israel, and fall, and should not deserve any clemency, and should be destroyed, as the Lord had commanded Moses." Jos. xi. 20. That is to say, God had known that it would be more for the advantage of the general good of mankind that these perverse nations should continue to fight against the Hebrews, and thus be exterminated.

the desired effect at once; it has a certain impatience of delay as perceiving nothing beyond the present moment. Thus when the Jews saw JESUS on the cross, they said to Him mockingly: "Come down now from the cross." But Christ did not come down for them. For He had not their haste. And is not long-suffering a great virtue of the wise? And is not the patience of God highly extolled in the Scriptures, and does it not shine forth most gloriously in the works of His mercy towards mankind? Now, this great patience is in fullest harmony and agreement with the utmost *celerity* of a supremely wise mode of acting.

913. The moral universe, then, does not advance merely, but rather hastens to its final development, and seizes upon and carries with it, in its rapid vortex, the intellectual and the physical universe also. If so much celerity of movement were not a most brilliant attribute of the work of the Omnipotent, the saints would not ask for it so pressingly in their prayers, nor would Christ have placed upon their lips the petition to which all in every age are ever giving utterance: *Thy Kingdom come.* For the rest, the wonderful celerity with which the eternal purpose of God is nearing its fulfilment is indicated in those passages of Holy Writ in which it is said: the day of the last judgment will come quickly, and it is described as imminent. "The great day of the Lord is near," says Sophonias, "near and exceeding swift." (1) In the Apocalypse it is said of the things revealed to St. John by JESUS, that they "must shortly come to pass," (2) and at last JESUS says: "Surely I come quickly," to whom the Church replies, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus." (3) The end of the universe then will come as soon as possible.

(1) Soph. i. 14. (2) Apoc. i. 1. (3) *Ibid.* xxii. 20.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE TWELFTH CONSEQUENCE—LAW OF THE ACCUMULATION OF GOODS.

'Εσθλὰ μὲν ἐσθλὸς ἔδυνε, χέρηα δὲ χείρονι δόσκεν.

Iliad. xiv. 382.

914. Let us pass to the second of the three laws which determine the mode in which Divine Providence carries out those operations of the universe whereby it obtains its end. This we call *the Law of the Accumulation of Goods.*

915. Since I consider my various writings as parts of a whole, I do not here repeat what I have already said on the general maxims which ought to guide a perfect ruler, seeing that this belongs to the *Philosophy of Politics.*

I will call to mind only some points which will be found set forth at length in that work, and supported by arguments of no inconsiderable weight.

1st. He rules a people best who, without doing wrong to anyone, secures, all things considered, the greatest and most comprehensive good of the governed.

2nd. It belongs to the perfection of good government to give a preference to the production of a greater amount of good, rather than to an equal distribution of good (for here there is question of such good as cannot be claimed as of right by any individual);

and therefore if, as a necessary consequence of the production of an equal distribution of good, the sum total of good were to be diminished, it would belong to perfect excellence in a ruler to promote this accumulation rather than the equal distribution of good. Let us see if this is verified in the Divine government, and we shall understand at once whether it appertains to Infinite Goodness to permit the accumulation of goods in the hands of certain individuals rather than to dispose of them by way of equal distribution to all.

916. In the first place, it is certain that Divine Providence follows most exactly the rules of justice and of supreme equity, which are the first elements of goodness, and the foundation on which it builds. This follows evidently from what I have said, viz., 1st, that Divine Providence establishes *universal laws* in order to produce its effects in the universe so that all beings are benefited if only they conform to them. 2ndly, It employs *universal means* of which all alike may profit. For example, the preaching of the Gospel is a universal and public means, which is compared to "a net cast into into the sea and gathering together of all kind of fishes;"(1) and to seed which is scattered broad-cast even upon stony ground;(2) the communication of grace to those who have certain predispositions is also a universal means. 3rdly, It makes use of *secondary causes*, amongst which we may number those who, according to their different attitude towards those universal laws and means, draw from them evil or good. For example, God uses great patience with all, according to certain universal laws; but as some sinners owe their salvation to this patience, so others are hardened by

(1) Matth. xiii. 47–49. (2) *Ibid.* 3–23.

it; according to the words of St. Augustine: "The evil hearts of men are hardened by an evil use of the patience of God." (1)

But I shall speak at length later on concerning the justice and the equity observed by God in regard to all men equally.

Therefore holding it as a most firmly established principle that the rights of justice and of equity must be respected before all things, I return to the question concerning goodness, and I ask: Does it most accord with goodness to accumulate good in the hands of some men, or to procure equal distribution to all? If by means of accumulation the sum total of the good of human nature is augmented, we must, as we have said already, give it the preference; but do we find this borne out by facts in God's Providential government?

917. It is so. For, we must consider how the good, which is intended by God's Providence, is produced.

How, then, is moral good, how is that final good which God has in view, and to which the good of happiness is attached, produced? How, and according to what ratio does it increase?

Moral good, especially that of the supernatural order, increases in the same way as capital in business, namely, by trafficking with it; this Christ has told us by comparing God in the dispensation of His treasures to a rich man who distributes his capital to his different servants in order that they may traffic with it, (2) the capital producing more or less fruit in proportion to the ability of those who traded with it; so that one pound produced ten pounds in the hands

(1) *Mala corda hominum, patientia Dei male utendo, durescunt.* QQ. in Ev., Lib. ii., q. xxxvii. (2) Luke xix. 12–24.

of one, at the same time that it produced only five in those of another. Is it not clear that in order that the greatest amount of fruit may be produced by the capital, more must be given to those who have the greatest ability for business?

But what, according to the Gospel, is this ability in putting capital to profit? By it is signified the greater or less goodness of men's dispositions, and, moreover, the use which Almighty God foresees they will make of their free-will. It is congruous, therefore, speaking generally, and supposing other things to be equal, that God should give more goods and graces to those who are better disposed, naturally no less than supernaturally, to use them, and who God foresees will make a better use of them.

But again, are not these very dispositions as well natural as supernatural of some individuals, and the good use which they will make of the capital entrusted to them, gifts of God Himself? Why then does not God distribute these dispositions, and the good use, in equal measure to all?

The same great Law of the Least Means which we are expounding always comes in. We have already seen that the gifts, whatever they may be, which God bestows on created beings, are necessarily limited in quantity (430-435). Hence, we must once more inquire whether it is more congruous to Infinite Goodness to *accumulate* or to *distribute* these dispositions and their good use. Let us see this by an example. Supposing that a hundred degrees of good dispositions and of good use of gifts had to be distributed, each of which is capable of doubling itself. Let the capital, that is to say, the degrees

of grace or of moral good at the original distribution, also equal a hundred. Let us suppose, in the first place, that these were distributed to each of a hundred men, one degree of good disposition and of the good use of gifts, and one degree of moral good, which is the capital to trade with. Let us next suppose that there were accumulated on one individual both a hundred degrees of good disposition and of the good use of gifts, and also a hundred degrees of moral good and of grace. Which of these two methods of distribution will secure the greatest profits? It is easy to make the calculation. In the first supposition, each degree of good disposition and of the good use of gifts, will return a profit of one degree of moral good besides that which had been originally received; thus the total profit of the hundred traders will be also a hundred. In the second supposition, a single man had a hundred degrees of good disposition, each one of which doubles the capital, so that having a capital equal to a hundred, it will return a profit of a hundred times a hundred, or ten thousand. The accumulation, therefore, of gifts in such a case has given more than the equal distribution by the sum of nine thousand nine hundred degrees of moral good. If, then, the highest goodness in a liberal ruler necessarily aims at obtaining the most abundant fruit possible, he ought to accumulate the goods he has to distribute, instead of dividing and scattering them.

918. This most important truth, which explains so many apparent irregularities in the government of Divine Providence, will be more clearly seen if we consider that in the moral life of man the progression of good, advances with ever increasing rapidity.

1st. Because as often as a man succeeds in gaining some new moral good, he increases the capital with which he trades; so that the traffic is always renewed in proportion to the increase of his capital, and is made to yield what is called in trade *compound interest.*

2ndly. Because up to a certain amount the fitness and the ability for business and the will to make a good use of gifts are themselves increased; so that the increased capital must be multiplied by the increased ability, if we wish to arrive at the accurate computation of the sum total of the profit. (1) But how many times is the traffic renewed, and, to use a common expression, the capital turned over? This is known to God alone: it is enough for us to know in some degree how rapid are the steps of the Saints in the paths of holiness.

919. Wherefore, as in the parable of the talents, each talent is said to produce another, the five produce five, the two two, to indicate the increase of a single business transaction; (2) so in the talent of the pounds, each pound is said to produce five pounds, and ten pounds, (3) to indicate the increase which accrues from repeated business transactions.

920. The same conclusion may be drawn from another consideration, namely, from the good which is diffused around them by those very persons on whom good has been accumulated. For, it is certain that if I enrich a person who has a heart full of affec-

(1) I think that any who have followed me so far, will not be displeased to read the 3rd Chapter of the *Divoto di Maria*, by Fr. Segneri, where he uses a similar calculation in order to show the immense sum of sanctity accumulated by the end of her life in the Blessed Virgin.

(2) Matt. xxv. 14, 23. (3) Luke xix. 12–20.

tion towards his fellow-men, and naturally beneficent, I shall have done a greater good than if I were to give the same quantity of riches to many persons of a hard and niggardly disposition.

From this truth, Leibnitz, who clearly understood it, drew an excellent principle for the regulation of benevolence. "If there are many persons," he writes to Arnald, "who are seeking for our aid and assistance, and we cannot relieve them all, we ought to give the preference to him by relieving whom a greater good on the whole would result.

"Hence it follows that when we have to make a selection, all other things being equal, we ought to prefer the person who is morally better than the others, that is to say, him who manifestly loves most, because the good we do to such an one will be multiplied by being reflected on many, and consequently, by assisting him only, many others are assisted; and even speaking generally, all other things being equal, we ought to prefer him whom we find in a better moral state; because we shall demonstrate that the assistance we can bestow on our neighbour follows the rule of multiplication, and not that of addition. (1)

(1) Prior to Leibnitz, something similar to this had been observed by Aristotle, when he wrote: "commutative justice follows the arithmetical, and distributive justice the geometrical ratio" (Nicom. lib. vi. c. vi.). This admirable principle was afterwards admitted by St. Thomas (S. p. ii. iiæ., q. lxi., art. 2). And in fact it is a dictate of common sense that the reward should be given in proportion to merit, office in proportion to fitness, benefits in proportion to goodness, and the aptitude of the person to make good use of them, &c. Grotius was wrong (De Jure Belli et Pacis, Bk. I., c. 1, §. viii.) when he maintained that this rule is not universal in application, because it might happen that only one fitting person could be found, and in such case the office would be given to him without any comparison with others; for it always

"In fact, if two numbers, one greater than the other, are multiplied by a third, the multiplication adds more to the greater number than would have been added by addition. Thus 5 multiplied by 2 gives 10, and 10 multiplied by 2 gives 20, 6 multiplied by 2 gives 12, and 12 multiplied by 2 gives 24. Now, it is evident that the 5 is augmented by 15, and the 6 by 18. Therefore, in the whole sum, we gain more by multiplying the greater number by the same multiplier.

"This difference between addition and multiplication is of great use also when there is question of justice, because to assist is to multiply, as to injure is to divide. The reason is, that he who assists or is assisted, is an intelligent being, and an intelligent being who makes use of what is given him may apply the whole to all, which is to multiply, or, as it is expressed in Latin, *in se ipsum ducere.*

"Let us suppose that one man had wisdom equal to three, and power as four; his whole value will be twelve, and not seven; because his wisdom can set in action every degree of his power.

"And even in things which are homogeneous the same is verified, because he who possesses a hundred thousand gold crowns is richer than a hundred persons, each of whom possesses a thousand crowns; because the union of all these crowns makes their outlay more profitable. The first will gain without exertion, whereas the others will lose while they labour. When, therefore, there is question of relieving persons in distress, and their poverty is equal, it

remains true in general, even if there be only one fitting person, that if another more fitting could be found, he would obtain the preference.

will be well to give the preference to the wisest; if the wisdom of the persons is equal, he is to be preferred who is best disposed to wisdom, as being most favoured by God, for to be born with the aptitude or disposition to wisdom is a gift of fortune, that is to say, of God.

"He who possesses (always supposing all other things equal) ought to obtain the preference, as being more favoured by fortune.

"On the contrary, if the question is between two persons, which shall be exempted from loss, or whenever loss or injury is to be incurred; we ought to prefer the one who has committed a simple fault to one who has combined deceit with dishonesty, or one who is unhappy or unfortunate to the other two." (1)

921. And here let it be noted that the condition required by Leibnitz, that in applicants for charity, "the poverty should be equal," is verified in respect of Divine Providence in the utmost completeness. For, before men receive the gifts of God, they have no being whatever; they are, all alike, nothing, which is that greatest of poverty which ceases even to be poverty, because not only is the subject in want of everything, but the subject itself is wanting. Wherefore, since God, before creating man, had not even the subjects to whom He could communicate His blessings, He could not be directed in their distribution by any right which the subjects might possess, nor by any reasons of congruity pre-existing in them. God was therefore perfectly free in the distribution of His gifts, and His Infinite Goodness, moreover, found no obstacles in the way of His dispensing them, so as to produce

(1) *Ep. ad Arnaldum.*

most fruit; and thus it happens that they are found accumulated in some individuals, because this accumulation is the best way of making them produce the greatest amount of fruit.

922. This consideration throws light on the sentence of the Gospel, "To everyone that hath, shall be given, and he shall abound; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him." (1) By this is meant that God gives new graces and new gifts to him who has already good dispositions to make good use of them; but from him in whom those good dispositions are wanting, those graces and gifts which he has, but which he abuses, will be taken away. How, then, is it said that the goods and graces taken from the unworthy and slothful servant are given to another who is deserving and diligent? By this is indicated the sum total of the predetermined quantity of grace and of gifts for distribution, because, as I have said, this quantity cannot be infinite; but is limited and measured out by the Eternal Wisdom (477-492); hence it is only a question of distributing it to mankind in this way and that, as shall be most profitable; nor is one single particle, however minute, ever lost or barren and unprofitable to its Lord and Master. (2) The good of sanctity therefore increases in the one and falls short in others without affecting the predestinated sum total. Not that God cannot continually increase the virtue and sanctity of a man, so long as he remains upon earth, but all this increase had been already

(1) *Omni habenti dabitur et abundabit: ab eo autem qui non habet, et quod habet auferetur ab eo.* Luke xix. 20.

(2) Is. lv. 11.

computed from the beginning by the great Arithmetician who made the world. Now, if any, by rejecting or burying their talent, tend to diminish it, an increase must accrue to others, because the sum total of good cannot be lessened. And all this happens through the operation of secondary causes, the powers of which are neither hampered nor hindered by that predestination of the sum total of good: on the contrary, this sum is calculated in harmony with those powers and with the use which the intelligent creatures to whom they are given are bound to make of them. But why, it may be asked, bestow the talent on him who buries it in the ground? and why intrust the pound to him who wraps it up in a napkin? It is Divine Mercy that so wills it, since but for the experiment, men, who are taught by experience, would not be fully convinced of the bad dispositions and worthlessness of him to whom no capital had been given to trade with. But when his slothfulness and folly have been demonstrated by the fact, when human nature has thus been instructed, and the Divine equity and benignity justified, then is the ill-bestowed talent of the useless servant taken from him, and added to the store of him who had given good proof of his diligence.

923. Here let me observe that the experiment was tried with the least possible sum, with a single talent, with one pound only, so that the smallest amount of capital might be wasted: and for the shortest period of time—nay, in reality, it is not wasted, for this good at least is got from it, as we have said, that he who had not aptitude for managing a small matter, is shown plainly to be unfitted to administer affairs of greater importance.

924. There are some who are scandalized at the apparent obscurity of the Holy Scriptures, since it seems to them that certain truths might be set forth with greater clearness and more expressly. But Christ would have us consider how in this, too, there shines forth the supreme goodness and wisdom with which God dispenses His gifts to men. For when Christ our Lord had to announce the truths of salvation to men of very various dispositions, some narrow and hard of heart, others well disposed to receive it, He chose rather, generally speaking, to declare it under the veil of parable, in order that, in this way, those who were of good will might meditate thereon, and, by asking the light from Himself, might come to understand those things which remained, as it were, hidden from others who were negligent, and without love for and even averse to the truth. This was to give five talents to him who had ability to gain other five, and one only to him who had it not; and this by an act of perfect equity, because it treated all alike. Without doubt, truth, even under the veil of parable, sends forth some rays of light into the mind; but to draw out all the light there hidden, requires some diligence. Hence, Christ being asked by His disciples why He spake in parables, replied: "Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven: but to them it is not given. For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away that also which he hath. Therefore do I speak to them in parables because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand;" (1) which is as much

(1) Matt. xiii. 10–13.

as to say: "You have good dispositions to draw profit from the truth, and therefore if a parable is given to you, you inquire the meaning of it, and this also is granted to you; but to those who have not good dispositions, the parables are given as to you, but the explanation is not given, because they do not seek for it; for to give it to such would be a waste of light, and nothing, according to the Law of Wisdom, should be wasted." Hence Christ has added: "The prophecy of Isaias is fulfilled in them who saith: By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes they have shut, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." (1)

Wherefore the veil which is over the Scripture to those and to so many others who are ill-disposed, and the covert sense of Scripture language proceeds from Wisdom which wills not an unprofitable waste of light; and it is the effect of mercy towards the ill-disposed in order not to increase their sin, so that, although guilty, their ignorance may be some excuse for them, that excuse which Christ on the Cross presented

(1) Isai. vi. 9 Matt. xiii. 14, 15.—Whoever wishes to see this argument concerning the economy of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness in speaking to men in obscure language, should read what has been said by Huteville Bk. ii. ch. 1 From its being according to the intent of God that the prophecies should be dictated in a somewhat enigmatical and parabolic style, this writer deduces the origin of the double sense of Scripture, the *literal* and the *moral*. "But God," he adds, "Who acts always by the ordinary ways, had disposed that this enigmatic style should belong to the genius of the nation," or rather, we should say, of that age of humanity.

to His Eternal Father: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (1)

We often find this same economy of Divine Providence declared in Holy Scripture, for the work of Wisdom is at all times consistent with itself. Thus, in the Book of Exodus, God speaks to the people of Israel that had prevaricated: "I will send an angel before thee. For I will not go up with thee, because thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I destroy thee on the way." (2) Because it would be a greater crime and deserving greater chastisement to abuse the greater and more excellent gifts of God.

925. The same principle of accumulation is set forth by Christ in another allegory. "No man lighting a candle covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it upon a candlestick, that they who come in may see the light." (3) Now, the candlestick represents those who have fitting dispositions for receiving with profit the light of grace; profitably not only to themselves, but for others, "that they who come in may see the light." And since the light given to the Apostles and the Saints, besides showing to the good the way in which they should walk, illuminates also, that is to say—brings into open day—the iniquity of the wicked, thus justifying the Justice of God; "for," He adds, "there is not any thing secret that shall not be made manifest, nor hidden that shall not be known and come abroad." (4) But because the gifts bestowed by our Lord require, in order that they may shine before the good and the wicked, the co-

(1) Luke xxiii. 34. See *Trattato della Coscienza* ("Treatise on Conscience") nn. 355, 356.

(2) Ex. xxxiii. 2, 3. (3) Luke viii. 16. (4) *Ibid.* 17.

operation of those who receive them, and those who receive them become thereby true candlesticks, therefore Christ continues His discourse to His disciples, saying: "Take heed, therefore, how you hear." That is, take heed that you hear my words, so that they may produce fruit; and He encourages them to this with the good which will then accrue to them. "For," he says, "whosoever hath, to him shall be given: and whosoever hath not, that also which he thinketh he hath, shall be taken away from him." (1) That is to say, the illusion of pride shall be taken away which persuades him that he knows whilst he is ignorant, and at last he will become enlightened to know his own ignorance, in virtue precisely of that light which makes all things manifest.

926. Christ expresses also the same sentiment, where He says: "In what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again, and more shall be given to you." (2) What is the measure with which man measures, not only persons, but all things in like manner? It is His own affection which is either a right or a wrong measure. If man measures things and persons with an affection in conformity with truth, then his measure is just; but if he measures every thing with an affection contrary to truth, and blindly following the passions, then his measure is unjust. Hence this sentence of Christ is the same as that expressed by St. Paul: "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting." (3) He that soweth in his

(1) Luke viii. 18. (2) Mark iv. 24. (3) Gal. vi. 8.

flesh is the man that hath not, and who loses even that which he thinketh he hath, his flesh destined to corruption; and he that soweth in the spirit, is the man that hath, and who gains life eternal. Hence Christ concludes once more: "To him that hath shall be given;" the good things of this life and of that which is to come shall be accumulated upon him; "and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath;" he shall become poorer and poorer in this world and in the world to come.

927. When, therefore, it is commonly said that "gold makes gold," that "one misfortune brings another," in this is expressed a fact of daily experience, a true law of Divine Providence, and whenever men complain of or malign Providence, it is because they do not understand, and are unable to lift themselves up to the contemplation of the sublime reasons of what it disposes.

What, then, is the conclusion we arrive at? This, that, beyond all doubt, the irregularities and inequalities observed in the distribution of the goods of nature and of grace, far from detracting any thing from Divine Providence, display, on the contrary, its exquisite wisdom and goodness.

928. But besides this, if the accumulation of goods is required by the Law of Wisdom, it must, therefore, necessarily reach the very highest degree, if it be granted that the universe is governed by Infinite Wisdom. Hence it was requisite that all those good things, all gifts and graces which God has designed to communicate to men, should be united and accumulated in one man only, (since this is the greatest accumulation which can be conceived,) and

from Him alone he communicated to other men in their extremity of poverty and misery. Now, this has been the case. And that one man is Jesus Christ. On Him, as on its one supremely simple central point, the entire universe depends; all true goods are found in Him alone: in Him alone they who have goods possess them. Because "He is the image of the invisible God, (1) the first-born of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him; and He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead: that in all things He may hold the primacy: because in Him, it hath well-pleased the Father, that all *fulness* should dwell: and through Him to *reconcile* all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His Cross, both as to the things on earth, and the things that are in heaven." (2)

929. But if in Christ the Law of Accumulation is completely carried into effect, the same law is carried out as far as is possible in respect also to other men to whom Christ communicates of His fulness.

Hence it is that in the sight of God, one man, or a few men, may contain, and do often actually contain, more good and are of more value than an innumerable

(1) *God* is here called the *Invisible God*, which excludes the error of the Platonists, who pretended that by natural intuition we can perceive the Divine Reality; which is not known to us positively by nature, but only through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(2) Col. i. 15–20.

multitude; so that Infinite Goodness, which always secures the greatest amount of good, when both cannot be saved, prefers to save that treasure which is contained in the one or the few, rather than that which is contained in an immense number; and therefore if a society which is corrupt and deserving of destruction, as respects the multitude, was nevertheless an instrument fitted to produce a very few saints, this produce may be of such value that it is fitting for Divine Goodness to preserve the entire society which produces a fruit so precious and exquisite, although in appearance so restricted. From this we may understand why it was that a few just men would have sufficed to save the Pentapolis from destruction,(1) and why it is that a few just men often preserve entire peoples from extermination.

(1) Gen. xviii.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE THIRTEENTH CONSEQUENCE—THE LAW OF GERM.

930. The Law of *Celerity*, therefore, and that of the *Accumulation of Good*, demonstrate the mode in which the Divine Wisdom brings into operation in the world the other universal law of the *Least Means*, and the special laws which are derived from it. But if we wish now to inquire *how* Almighty God obtains that *celerity* and that *accumulation* we have spoken of, another law presents itself, which we have named the Law *of Germ*. And this will form the subject of the present chapter.

931. By the *Law of Germ* I mean, "that decree of the Creator whereby He has ordained that all goods should be in the first instance in an incipient state, a state of involution and of potentiality, and should afterwards be evolved, and obtain their distinctive characteristics through their own intrinsic movement.

932. Thus conceived, we see this law to be a legitimate consequence of the principle I have laid down, that "God willed to draw from His creatures all the good that they themselves, according to their own nature, were able to produce without the intervention of another cause, which would be superfluous whenever the sufficient cause existed already in themselves." (511-513)

933. From this principle therefore we deduced, in the next place, the necessity of secondary causes (514-521); because this principle supposes them, for, it only says

that "secondary causes are to be left to do all that they can effect;" which expresses the parsimony of the divine intervention; and therefore besides the existence of secondary causes, that freedom of action also, and the occasion shall be given them for doing all the good they are capable of.

934. The *Law of Germ*, therefore, adds nothing beyond the declaration of the mode by which Almighty God draws the greatest amount of good that is possible from secondary causes, and it is divided into three parts.

The first part of the Law of Germ is, that all beings have been created by God in a state of involution.

Philo (1) is of opinion that God in the beginning created the fertilized germs of plants and of animals (with the exception of man whom He formed immediately), and that these germs afterwards developed into plants and animals, as the Book of Genesis seems to give us clearly to understand; (2) with which agrees the common opinion, that the season when the world was created, or at least when the germs began to move, was that of Spring. (3)

And according to the same economy, God, in the beginning, planted the seeds, or, as St. Augustine expresses it, the seminal reasons of all things, in order that, by self-evolution from their state of greater involu-

(1) See the three discourses of Philo on Providence, published in Armenian f. viii.-ix. St. Augustine is of the same opinion. *De Trin.* Bk. iii., c. xiii.

(2) See the Author's *Catechesi* ("Catechetical Discourses") no. xxxii.

(3) . . . . . quando l'amor divino
Mosse da prima quelle cose belle. Dante. *Inf.* I. 39, 40.

The poet, in imitation of Scripture, calls the stars "things of beauty," *par excellence.*

tion and concealment, they might become the causes to themselves of their own development and perfection.

935. *Second part of the Law of Germ*, that the first germs produce by evolution other germs, and so *ad infinitum*.

The evolution which takes place by means of seeds or germs continually renewed, is more speedy in its results than any other, since it goes on by way of continual multiplication; for every germ is productive, and what it produces is again itself productive. Mathematicians understand well the marvellous rapidity with which the product is thus multiplied, so as in brief space to exceed all calculation.

As to this law we must attribute the exuberant lavishness of nature in the production of vegetable and animal life: so, in the moral order also, is there a like celerity of production.

936. *Third part of the Law of Germ*, that the number of germs should be at first the least possible sufficient for the purpose. And how few were necessary at the beginning may be seen from this that, as has been said, they have all been so constituted as to produce or bring into existence other germs like to themselves, so that a single germ in the beginning would seem to have been sufficient for each species, and it is probable that this parsimony was observed by God in creation.(1) Concerning the Law of Germ, these few words may perhaps suffice.

(1) I have in this chapter used the word *germ* rather than seed, in order to avoid the question concerning what St. Augustine terms *seminum semina*, the number of which cannot be so limited, for the reasons which I shall have occasion elsewhere to explain.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ON THE ABSOLUTE MEASURE OF GOOD AND OF EVIL.

937. We have, then, arrived at the term of our undertaking, which was to unfold the Law of the *Least Means*, and to exhibit its admirable fecundity, by causing it to bring forth, as it were, from its own womb, sø many other special laws which it virtually contained, and applying it in justification of the government of Divine Providence. The result has been that, in my intimate conviction, Divine Providence has been completely justified, or rather, glorified in an eminent degree. For, the evidence which these arguments convey to the mind, is such that he whom they failed to convince would give the most certain indication of having failed to grasp the argument. Here, then, I might consider my work at an end; because, after what has been said, no further objection can possibly be raised against the Providence of our Creator; all objections have been absolutely annihilated. And let it be observed that the justification set forth of the Divine government of the world, is independent of the consequences flowing from it. God is bound to follow that eternal Law of the *Least Means*, whatever may be its subsequent effect, whatever may be the absolute measure of good which may be obtained thereby, whether it be very great or very small. It is true that, if the sum total of good should happen to be less than that of evil, there would not have been a sufficient reason for creation,

and it would therefore never have taken place. But if the sum total of good exceeded, however little, that of evil, more good not being obtainable by the Law of the *Least Means*, creation then would not have been useless, and it would have a sufficient reason. And since that excess of good would be nevertheless the greatest that was possible, we could not therefore ask for more from Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, because Infinite Wisdom and Goodness is not obliged to do what is absurd, and cannot do it, or will it; and it would be to will that which is absurd to desire a greater good than is possible.

Nevertheless, I cannot lay aside my pen until I have satisfied the reasonable desire of knowing the results of the best mode of governing creation in accordance with the Law of the *Least Means*, that is to say, whether the quantity of good that will ultimately accrue be much or but little greater than the evil necessarily permitted in order to obtain it.

938. This result is consoling beyond measure. Not only does the sum total of good exceed in quantity the sum total of evil, it is a quantity which is infinite in comparison with the latter; so that if we chose to apply to it the principles of mathematics, the quantity of evil would appear so evanescent that we might suffer it to drop out of the calculation. And this most happy result furnishes us with another and unexpected way of justifying Divine Providence from every censure. For, if evil, though it seems so great in the narrow measure of our minds, is yet in itself so little as compared to the infinite amount of good, that when from this amount we have subtracted both the evil itself and a quantity of good equal to it and necessary to counter-

act it, the residuum of good remains no less infinite than it was from the first, it is plain that this universe gives a net result which is infinite in quantity.

Such is the conclusion which we draw from the reasoning which follows.

939. We have seen, first of all, that evil is only a *privation of good;* this does not express an annihilation but only a diminution of good. Hence it follows that there can not be such a thing as *pure evil*, namely, an evil such as to be nothing else but evil, since there is always required a good in which the evil resides, and of which it is a diminution. (1) Good, on the contrary, which is a positive thing, may be *pure good* without admixture of any evil. This accrues to the advantage of the sum total of good, because we must add to the sum total of pure good, all that quantity of good which is found mixed up with evil.

This has been observed by the greatest masters of thought. St. Thomas writes: "Evil pure and simple, without any admixture of good, cannot exist; whereas the supreme good is absolutely without any admixture of evil." (2)

The master of St. Thomas had said the same, eight

(1) Evil is appositely called by St. Augustine, *bonum diminutum;* but not all diminution of good is evil, for the nature of evil requires that diminution which breaks the *order of good*, not that which only lessens its *quantity*.

(2) *Malum non potest esse purum absque commixtione boni; sicut bonum summum est absque commixtione mali.* S. Suppl. q. lxix., art. vii., ad. 9. To those philosophers who pretend to argue from the existence of evil to the non-existence of God, St. Thomas gives a triumphant answer. "If there is such a thing as evil, there is a God. For evil there could not be, without a violation of the order of good, the violation of which constitutes evil. Now the order of good could not exist if there were no God." *Cont Gen.* Bk. iii., c. 80, 7.

ages earlier. "There is a nature in which no evil whatever is found or could possibly exist; but a nature there cannot be in which there is no good. Hence, not even the nature of the devil himself, in so far as it is a nature, can be said to be evil, but what makes it evil is its perversion." (1)

Pure evil, therefore, has no existence; but good, either pure or mixed, is found in all things that exist.

940. Moreover, a certain quantity of good is always present wherever there is evil, not only because of the existence of an entity, a nature in which the evil resides, every entity or nature being itself a good, but in the very act of perversity on the part of the creature, there is always something that is good; because no intelligent nature can desire anything as its end unless it finds in it something that is good. Hence St. Thomas says that every one who does evil, *intendit aliquid bonum*, (2) has for his object some good, and that no intelligent being can desire evil as evil, so that evil is always *præter intentionem agentis*. (3) Therefore that good which is found in the act of malice must be added to the sum total of good.

941. Whenever evil is found in any being, and still more when it is moral evil, which is the greatest of all evils, since it is grafted so to speak upon good, it does not simply lie side by side with the good, but there springs up a contention between the good and the evil that is mingled with it; in which combat the good resists and fights against the evil; and thus sorrow and pain are originated. Now, this activity, which is naturally excited in good by its contest with

(1) St. Aug. *De Civitate Dei*, Bk. xix., c. 13.
(2) *Cont. Gent.* Bk. iii., c. 71. (3) *Ibid.* Bk. iii., c. 4.

evil, although it does not succeed in freeing itself from evil, is nevertheless a good in itself, and a new accession of good which is due to the presence of evil. Hence, evil cannot exist without giving occasion to good, *i.e.*, without affording the nature in which it exists and which is in itself good, an opportunity for exerting its natural activity. This ontological law obtains also in regard to the evil of which animal nature is susceptible, in which pain is but the struggle of that nature to rid itself of evil, no less than as regards the evil of which the intellectual nature is susceptible, where the evil of pain is a necessary consequence of moral evil. Since it is only the last with which we are concerned in treating of the Providence of God with regard to moral-intellective beings (which are alone worthy of being proposed as ends to the eternal Wisdom and Goodness), therefore it suffices to consider in this place how the pain which inseparably accompanies moral evil, repairs in another way the infraction of the moral order, restores it even in spite of the evil-doer, which is an undoubted good. When I say that moral evil occasions in him who commits it an evil of pain, I do not mean that this is always bodily evil, although there is often this in addition, but an interior and spiritual torment; since it is a most certain fact of human nature that, as St. Augustine says, "every inordinate soul is a pain to itself." For, if such be the necessary and truly ontological effect of evil, considered in each individual, much more is it the effect of that order which the Divine Wisdom has established amongst many individuals so disposed that their conflicts shall terminate to the greater pain of the guilty and to the greater satisfaction of the good.

"Wherefore the miserable," says St. Augustine, who wrote more clearly and triumphantly than all others in justification of Providence, "if inasmuch as they are miserable they are not at peace, since they are deprived of the tranquillity of that order wherein there is no perturbation; nevertheless, since they are deservedly and justly unhappy, in their very misery cannot exclude themselves from the order established by God, not because they are united to the blessed, but rather because they are separated from them by the law of order. Because he who sins is worse if he rejoices in the violation of justice. But he who suffers (on account of sin) though he may draw no amendment therefrom, suffers at least for the loss of salvation. And since justice and salvation are both good, and it is reasonable to grieve rather than rejoice over the loss of good—therefore it is undeniably more fitting that the unrighteous man should be afflicted with punishment than that he should have joy and pleasure in his crime. Hence, as to rejoice in having cast away good by sin, is a proof of an evil will; so to grieve under punishment for the good lost, is proof of a good nature. For, he that grieves on account of the lost peace of nature, does so because he has still in himself some remains of peace which make his nature a friend to itself." (1)

Wherefore there is more of good in the wicked who suffer, than in the wicked who rejoice. And since all the wicked suffer more or less, it therefore follows that there is no evil which does not draw after it this good of penal or punitive justice, wherein is exhibited the essential goodness of being, which, even when it

(1) St. Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, Bk. xix., c. 13.

renounces its own proper and individual order, is unable to break with the universal order, but rather makes it to shine forth in another way, and this must be added to the sum total of good.

942. But we have seen throughout the whole of this book how many other goods, and how great and precious, Almighty God draws from the permission of moral evil. We have seen how much greater is the good which He draws from sinners if they are converted, and how much good He draws from them even if they remain in their obstinacy. "These," says St. Augustine, "are called vessels of wrath, because even these God employs to the service of good, to make known the riches of His glory in the vessels of mercy."(1) Nor is this the case in the present life only, but in the other as well. For, those who suffer the penalty of their injustice in eternity, are so many living, and I had almost said, smoking monuments from which the blessed gain a more vivid knowledge of the gratuitous mercy which has been used towards them, and the greatness of their happiness; and hence they love and praise God the more, that God Who has delivered them from the punishment which of themselves they had no way to escape, and they rejoice in God all the more for that they know what they might have had to suffer; for, this is the law of knowledge in intelligent beings, that they have need of experience and of contrast in order that their knowledge may make a vivid impression on them. For this reason it was that the Greeks, as Xenophon tells us, on the approach of the Persian armies, when they were about to engage the enemy,

(1) *Op. Imp. contr. Jul.* I. cxxvii.

made a vow never to rebuild those temples which should be destroyed or burnt by the barbarians, that so their ruins might remain before the eyes of their posterity as eternal and most certain monuments of barbarian impiety: not indeed that this knowledge could not otherwise be transmitted to posterity, but because it would thus speak more eloquently, and with greater effect, if the facts remained so that they could behold them with their own eyes. All the good, therefore, that in a thousand ways God knows how to draw from moral and penal evil, even from that which endures for ever, must be added to the sum total of good.

943. Let us come now to the eudemonological evils. These happen either to the wicked or to the good. To the wicked they are true evils, because they deprive them of that corruptible good for which they are seeking. Montaigne has appositely remarked that "other sorrows receive their alleviation from reason; that of vice has not this comfort." (1)

Let us distinguish therefore between *pleasures* and *contentment:* and consider how this latter is worth more than the former. It is contentment which is wanting to the wicked, and which can never be wanting to the good, whatever may be their sorrows in this world. Therefore the evils affecting the happiness of the good are not, properly speaking, evils, since that is not evil which does not disturb contentment of soul, and which we would not wish to have otherwise. But if the good did not heartily accept of these afflictions, that would be owing to their not being entirely good, and therefore from their having some moral

(1) Bk. iii., ch. 2.

defect in their will for the purging away of which these evils may be most useful. But if they heartily accept them, by this very fact they have already gained moral improvement, and acquired a good immeasurably greater than the evil which they suffer. If, then, in respect of the good, the evils which affect their happiness are not evils, if they are evils in respect of the wicked, but evils such as effect the restoration and revindication of justice from the violence it has suffered: it is evident that all alike contribute to the sum total of good.

944. Moreover, all evil is limited, so that there cannot be such a thing as *supreme evil*, precisely because, as we have seen, there can be no *pure or unmixed evil*, and because evil being only a diminution of that order which is in a finite nature, and which is proper to it, the loss of it can be only that of an order and degree which is finite. On the contrary, there can be, and there is a *supreme good*, which is God, and this can be possessed by the intelligent creature. It is true that the intelligent creature can rebel against God, and, in some sort, even hate God Himself; and this disorder contains a something of the infinite, that is to say, it is infinite on the part of one of the two terms of the relation, which is Infinite.(1) But in the first place, it is not, properly speaking, God, as such, Who is the object of the hatred of the reprobate, for God, as God, can not be hated by any creature; that object is therefore God as punitive justice, inasmuch as He is an impediment to that corruptible good on which the reprobate have set their affections. Hence, the precise object of their hatred is not,

(1) *La Società ed il suo fine.* ("Society and its Aim.") Bk. iv.

properly speaking, infinite, as the object of the love of the Saints is infinite.

945. In the second place, the wicked do not know God in the same way in which the just do, who have been raised to the supernatural order; for these know Him in an infinitely more excellent way. Since, therefore, love and hatred are in proportion to their objects, and the degree in which they are known, hence the hatred of God, and, therefore the moral evil of the wicked, can never be as great as is the love of God, and therefore the moral good of the Saints; but this last must always be, beyond all comparison, the greater.

The sum total, therefore, of moral good is, beyond all measure, greater than the sum total of moral evil, and the good affecting happiness, exactly corresponds to moral good, since the order of Divine Justice wills that the first shall be always united to the second.

946. It must be added that the simple absence of the supernatural order in the soul, that is, of the grace by which man is made to partake of the Divine nature, supposing human nature to remain uncorrupted and the will undepraved, has not, properly speaking, the nature of evil for man, because the supernatural order is not an element that constitutes or that is in any way due to his nature. Moral evil, therefore, begins and finishes with nature: it keeps within the sphere limited by this. Whatever is supernatural and infinite is not subject to corruption. It is true that if, after having been elevated to the supernatural order, our nature should fall into sin, it acts injuriously towards the supernatural order, and therefore this sin is

infinitely greater than it would have been if human nature had never been raised to the supernatural order. But it remains true all the same that the supernatural order, since it ceases with sin, escapes that corruption of sin of which it is not susceptible, and therefore the corruption remains within the sphere of the order of nature, although it has relation to the infinite. But the holy man, on the contrary, being united to God, and a partaker of the Divine Nature, enjoys the possession of the supernatural order; thus is human nature elevated above itself even to the infinite, and the infinite becomes one thing as it were with our humanity. It is therefore evident that the least degree of supernatural good exceeds, beyond all measure, all possible evils, since there is no proportion between supernatural good and evil which stands below nature. Hence there is more of good in one person who is in the grace of God, and who enjoys the possession of God Himself, than there is of evil in all the wicked and all the devils taken together. The sum total, therefore, of good is infinitely greater than the sum total of evil.

947. The same may be said of eudemonological good. Because the least of the Saints enjoys more happiness than all the damned and the devils together suffer, because he enjoys the infinite and in an order which is infinite. And this excess of the eudemonological good we may gather from the very expressions of Holy Scripture in which we read that "eye hath not seen, or ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God has prepared for those who love Him;" (1)

(1) 1 Cor. ii. 9.

expressions which are nowhere used to describe the torments, how severe soever, of the reprobate. Again, it is written, that "grace and peace is to His elect, but the wicked shall be punished according to their own devices;" (1) because malice begins in thought, namely, with the *practical esteem* of things, and the punishment is in proportion to their thought, because it comes to the reprobate as a consequence of and in proportion to the perversity of their mind. So also is it taught in other places of Scripture, that the torments of the reprobate shall be in proportion to their indulgence in the pleasures of sin; (2) but not that the happiness of the Saints shall be measured by what they have suffered, but that it shall surpass all the sufferings of this present life, and that their reward shall be beyond all measure and worthy of the Omnipotence of God, Who says, "I am thy reward exceeding great." (3)

948. Moreover, the just shall enjoy all things, and St. Paul says of them expressly: "All things are yours, . . . whether it be the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come: for all things are yours: and you are Christ's: and Christ is God's." (4) Thus the rich patrimony of the elect is formed of all things besides the possession of God. The wicked, on the contrary, will not be tormented by all things; but by those only which are destined for their punishment. Nor shall the just enjoy only the dominion of the universe, all things co-operating to their happiness and enjoyment; they shall also be, and already

(1) Wisd. iii. 9, 10.
(2) Apoc. xviii. 7.
(3) Gen. xv. 1.
(4) 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

are, judges of all things, (1) and fellow-workers with God Himself, in His Providential government.

949. Moreover, the reprobate stand alone in their sufferings, each suffers from himself, and from that punishment caused by his accomplices in wickedness. But the just form one single, most intimately united body, and each enjoys and shall for ever enjoy the beatitude of all in common, so that the happiness of all is reflected and multiplied a thousandfold in each. Hence God is called in the Scriptures the *Most High*, principally because of the excess of goodness with which He defends and exalts the just above the wicked; (2) and speaking of the lot reserved for His faithful, it is written: "Thou hast multiplied Thy wonderful works, O Lord my God: and in Thy thoughts

(1) "The spiritual man judgeth all things" (1 Cor. ii. 15). The faculty of judging is in proportion to *merit*, because it is a consequence of the more or less perfect fulfilment of the law. Hence Nineveh itself, Tyre and Sidon, although reprobate, shall condemn the generation that was deaf to the words of Christ, because they were less guilty. For this reason those who are more perfect will judge the less perfect; thus in the hierarchy itself of the Saints, each order shall judge the inferior orders, and shall be judged by the orders that are above it. Only Christ will be judged by no one, but shall be judge of all. As He is the source of merit, so is He the Judge who will communicate the power of judging in exact proportion to the merits of each. Hence the Holy Fathers give to the followers of the Evangelical Counsels special prerogatives in the Last Judgment. Let us hear the Venerable Bede. "There shall be two orders of the Elect at the Last Judgment: one consisting of those who shall judge together with our Lord, of whom Matthew makes mention in this place (Ch. xix.) who left all things and followed Him: the other consisting of those who shall be judged by our Lord, Who did not indeed leave all things, yet took care daily to give alms of what they had to the poor of Christ, for which cause they shall hear in the judgment these words addressed to them: 'Come ye blessed of My Father.'" (*Hom. in natali S. Bened.*)

(2) Ps. lxxxi. 19.

there is no one like to Thee," (1) which is the same as saying that no one can conceive that happiness which God hath prepared for the just. (2)

950. Wherefore, if the least degree of supernatural good, as well moral as eudemonological, in one single creature, exceeds all moral and eudemonological evil that can be found in all creatures, human and angelic, how great beyond compare must be the excess of the sum total of good over the evil, when we consider that in the elect the supernatural good is accumulated beyond all measure, and that whatever opinion we may follow as to the number of those who shall be saved, we know that there must at any rate be many, because Christ has said, that in "His Father's house there are many mansions."(3) Moreover, in order to fill the supper chamber, besides those who came after the second invitation to fill up the vacant places (which are the types of which we have spoken), it was necessary to compel a crowd of all sorts of people to enter: the blind and the lame, the

(1) Ps. xxxix. 5, 6. (2) 1 Cor. ii. 9.

(3) John xiv. 2. St. Augustine, who holds that the number of those who shall be saved is less than of those who shall be lost, nevertheless applies to the first the promise made to Abraham: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea-shore" (Gen. xxii. 17). The faithful, holy, and good, in comparison of the multitude of the wicked, are few, indeed; yet, considered *in themselves, they are many:* because "many are the children of the desolate—more than of her who hath a husband" (Galat. iv. 27); and "many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11); and because God will cleanse for Himself a numerous people, "a pursuer of good works" (Tit. ii. 14). And in the Apocalypse we behold a multitude that no man could number, from all tribes, and peoples, and tongues, in white robes and with palms of victory in their hands (Apoc vii.)—S. Aug. Ep. xciii. ad Vincen. Rogat. n. 150.

poor and the maimed, just as they happened to be found along the roads. (1) The dimensions of the city of God are exceedingly vast, for it contains 1,628,000 cubic furlongs; (2) and it is built all of living stones. Finally, it is written that God shall reign over all the nations, and that they shall all rejoice in Him, (3) and that He shall save both "men and beasts," (4) that is to say, sinners, who are likened unto beasts.

951. But how overwhelming is the sum total of good, if we add to the account that which is contained in Jesus Christ Himself! What balance is there that can sustain so great a weight in which are hidden "all the treasures of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God," (5) "all fulness" of grace; (6) Here we see realized the architype of humanity, exalted to the highest summit of perfection; all the other saints are the realization of particular types and species, and have divided amongst them that which Christ has in plenitude, and which He communicates to them while He takes nothing from Himself, according to that which is written, "of His fulness we have all received," (7) in such sort that the full species, which is imperfect, draws from the full species complete, and yet takes nothing from its perfection. Let us sum up, therefore, thus:— In the first place: Christ is God, and in comparison with God, the whole world is nothing. Next: the Humanity of Christ has the grace of the hypostatic union, which is infinite, and nothing bears any propor-

(1) Luc. xiv. 21, 23.
(2) Apoc. xxi. 16.
(3) Ps. xlvi.
(4) Ps. xxxv. 7.
(5) Col. ii. 3.
(6) *Ibid.* i. 19.
(7) John i. 16.

tion to the infinite. In the third place: the Humanity of Christ possesses God, in virtue of this union, and therefore its riches are infinite, in comparison with which the world is nothing. From these riches, that is to say, from God Who is possessed by that Sacred Humanity (a possession which consists in being possessed, which is the only way in which the finite can possess the infinite), it can draw whatsoever it will, not merely the beatific vision, but the highest degree of comprehensive vision that is possible to human nature. All moral good whatsoever is therefore realized in Christ alone. To so unlimited a quantity of moral good, corresponds an equal quantity of eudemonological good: "All My things are Thine and Thine are Mine," He says to the Heavenly Father; and "glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee." (1)

952. Nor is this all; there is still more to our purpose. Whatever Christ possesses, He shares with His elect in all its plenitude, with the sole exception of the hypostatic union, and what appertains to it as a property of that union and is therefore incommunicable. For to Christ, says St. Thomas, was given grace "as to a certain universal principle in the class of beings possessing grace." (2) Hence the Humanity of Christ not only derives from the Divinity to which it is united all grace for itself, but all that immense treasure destined by Him to be shared amongst all men; wherefore He says: "for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth," (3) as if He would say: "From the fountain head of My

(1) John xvii. (2) S. p. III., q. vii., art. 9.
(3) John xvii. 19.

Divinity I draw first into My own humanity that grace which I intend to pour forth from the plenitude of my humanity into the humanity of other men."

Thus the habitual grace of Christ is broken up, so to speak, and renews itself in the saints in every possible way; so that in all the saints, taken as a whole, we behold, as it were, a reproduction of the realization of the archetype humanity, only that in Christ, the union of all graces and the inexhaustible source of the divinity which is His Person itself, renders His grace beyond all measure greater, and so makes it His own, that He is the Master of all His graces, and herein the *specific eminence* of Christ consists.

953. Yet we must reflect, moreover, that to every saint He gives a certain power of communicating to others the graces received, similar to that communicative power which He possesses as Master of His own graces. So that the conversation, and the words and the acts of every holy man communicate somewhat of benediction and of grace to all those with whom he is brought into contact and who are disposed to receive it; but this diffusion of grace, which by diffusion is again divided, is in proportion to the measure of sanctity in him from whom it proceeds, and thus in a certain way grace becomes threefold in the whole body of those to whom the saints communicate various parts of their abundance. But those saints who have received grace from saints preceding them, are not on that account in any way hindered from obtaining yet more grace immediately from the fountain head, which is Christ, Who dwells in the just for everlasting ages. Thus is

verified that which is written in the Psalms in the Person of Christ: "I will show forth Thy truth with my mouth to generation and generation. For Thou hast said: Mercy shall be built up for ever in the heavens (*i.e.*, in the souls of the just): Thy truth shall be prepared in them. I have made a covenant with My elect. I have sworn to David My servant (*i.e.*, to the father of the Messiah), Thy seed (the Messiah) will I establish for ever. And I will build up thy throne (in the saints) unto generation and generation." (1)

954. Once more, to the sanctity of Christ and of the saints there corresponds an equal proportion of eudemonological good in Christ, and from Christ communicated to the whole multitude of His saints: "I will make Him as My first-born, high above all the kings of the earth. I will keep My mercy for Him for ever, and His throne as the days of heaven. But if His children forsake My law, if they profane My justices, and shall not keep My commandments, I will visit their iniquities with a rod and their sins with scourging; but My mercy I will not take away from Him, nor will I suffer My truth to fail. Neither will I profane My covenant, and the words that proceed from My mouth I will not make void." (2) These words demonstrate the certainty of the predestination of the elect, and the immovable security of that good which God from eternity has decreed to draw from His creatures throughout an eternity yet to come.

955. And precisely because the good that God has decreed will endure for all eternity, I would remind my reader that he must multiply the whole amount

(1) Ps. lxxxviii. 2, 3, 4, 5. (2) *Ibid.* 28–35.

of good which I have described by the whole duration of eternity.

956. Therefore the absolute quantity of good that God draws from His creatures, exceeds the quantity of evil by a measure which is beyond all measure, and is inconceivable to the human understanding. How consoling is this result for us poor and suffering mortals! How perfectly does it avail for the justification of Divine Providence in the permission of evil! or rather, how efficaciously does it invite every thinking and right-minded man to celebrate without end God's praises!

957. But it may be that even after we have thus exceedingly magnified God, because He has taken His Infinite Wisdom into the service of His Goodness which exults therefore with everlasting joy, I say, even after this, our mind may still recur to the thought of those miserable beings that shall be lost, and may lament over them as victims immolated for the sake of an universal good, and may reason thus and inquire: "Is it then true that God has abandoned these individual souls? Has He by an inevitable fate devoted them to eternal evil? What fault, then, is it of theirs if they are lost in the execution of a decree so terrible?" Although by raising these questions we show that we have all but forgotten many things that have been said above, and which answer them most fully, nevertheless it is not unlikely, the objection may be raised anew in the weak will and vacillating mind, even after it has been beaten down.

Men often turn, whether through distraction of mind or an irresistible instinct, to this supreme question, although it has often been answered, met and solved

by irresistible reasons; they return to it, not under the guidance of tranquil contemplation, but in perturbation of mind, which always seems to behold in these lost souls an immense object of sorrowful compassion. Therefore in going counter to such human weakness in which the persuasion is shaken even when the reason does not doubt, we will treat in the following chapter *ex professo* of that Providence which God uses towards each in particular of those intelligent beings which He has created.

CHAPTER XXXV.

OF PROVIDENCE IN REGARD TO THE GOOD OF PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS.

Cum enim scriptum sit : "Universæ viæ Domini misericordia et veritas," nec injusta ejus gratia, nec crudelis esse potest justitia.

(St. Aug., *De Civ. Dei*, Bk. VII., c. 27.)

958. The question regarding *universal good*, which comprehends all intelligent creatures, and that which regards the *good of particular beings*, are two questions between which there is an immense difference; and the objection about the salvation of individuals is apt to arise from our confounding the two questions together, and so being led to suppose that the solution of the first clashes with the solution of the second.

The argument takes this form: "If in order to obtain the greatest sum total of good, some intelligent creatures must necessarily be lost, they are lost in virtue of that decree which establishes the maximum of good; therefore their perdition is necessary, and therefore they are lost without any fault of their own." But no reasoning could be more lame and false from every point of view; no reasoning could show greater ignorance of the Divine mode of operation.

Let us begin by distinguishing the two questions; and show, in the next place, that principles wholly different, though not repugnant to one another, are required for the solution of each; and that the special solutions, far from being contradictory, are found

marvellously to agree, and aid us to prove the infinite perfection of God, Who is the first and supreme cause of all things.

959. The question of the sum total of good regards the *end* of the government of the universe.

The question of the good of individuals regards the *means*, because particular good is the means for the obtaining of the general good, since this is precisely the result and sum total of the particular good of all the individuals composing the universe.

960. The sum total of good is the object of Divine Goodness. That is to say, it is the law of highest goodness in a ruler that he desire to obtain, and actually do obtain, the greatest possible good of his subjects.

The particular good of individuals is not only the object of the *goodness* of a ruler, but it is also the object of his *justice* and *equity* and of his sense of what is *fitting*, because particular goods must be ordered to the universal good, *in such wise* that the rights of individuals may not be injured, and that that which is fitting, may in no case be interfered with, nay, rather that the greatest goodness and courtesy possible may be used towards all and each.

961. The Law of the *Least Means* presides, as we have seen, over the *general good of all;* because this good is nothing else but "the greatest possible good obtained by the least possible means." Other laws preside over the *particular good* of *individuals* arising from the relations of the particular individual with the ruler, which may be summed up shortly in this formula: "The ruler shall cause no evil to any individual, shall give to all what is their due, and even more than is due to them in the largest measure possible."

962. The question, therefore, of the general good is solved by the decree to obtain "the greatest amount of good by the least means possible;" whereas the question of the good of individuals is solved by establishing such a *mode* of treating individuals as, without doing them any injury, but on the contrary benefiting them, may make them all contribute directly or indirectly to the realization of the greatest general good.

963. We have therefore to reconcile the solutions of these two questions, so that we may be certain of obtaining, on the one hand, the end of the maximum of good with the minimum of means, and on the other, that each individual be treated with respect, and with all possible goodness and generosity. It is precisely this conciliation, this most perfect agreement, which is exhibited in the divine government of the world, and which deserves the everlasting praises offered up to God by all the blessed. Let us see, therefore, with what admirable goodness God has treated and continues to treat all men individually, without thereby in any way hindering that grand end which He has proposed to Himself, nay, by these very means, promoting its attainment.

964. God's way of acting would not be such as is befitting the Supreme Being, did it not at the same time correspond with all His Divine attributes. That this may be the case, three special classes of conditions must be complied with:

1st. The first is that which corresponds to the *intrinsic order of being*, which order is found originally in God alone; and this class of conditions is anterior

to every creature, is wholly objective, presides over creation, has an *ontological necessity*.

2nd. The second class is that which arises from the *moral exigence of creatures*, supposes their existence, is founded upon their existence (viz., on their relation with ideal being) as its title, and has a *moral necessity*.

3rd. The third kind is founded solely on the *plenitude of the goodness of God*, without any title in the creature or in its type; it is, on the contrary, a thing altogether free, or if we try to find a necessary reason for it in the divine liberty itself, which tends to that which is best, it may be said to have a *teletic necessity*.

965. The first species of conditions is reduced to the impossibility of God's creating a being, lacking this intrinsic order, which essentially belongs to being itself. Opposed to this condition would be:

1st. A creation unable to attain its end, or the end of which was not moral, because the *moral good* alone has by its essence the nature of end. Hence, to imagine a universe in which intelligent creatures were happy without being moral, would be to imagine nothing but an absurdity; for happiness essentially demands moral good, which is the highest and ultimate good in which any intelligent being can rejoice.

2ndly. A creation in which the intelligent beings destined for ultimate and final good, which is moral good, were not subject to the eternal law of justice, which wills that happiness should be united to virtue and unhappiness to vice. Hence to imagine a creation in which vice should meet with no punishment, is to imagine an absurdity. In creating such a world,

God would destroy Himself, because He would destroy the intrinsic order of being in its most excellent part, which is that whereby it *rejoices* in an end. Compassion for the wicked, who undergo just punishment, arises in man only from the limitation of his mind, which is not deep enough to understand how intimate, necessary, immutable, is the connexion between guilt and punishment. Perfect intelligence and perfect goodness is therefore necessitated to prefer the union of punishment with vice to the happiness of the vicious, because happiness of this kind is not a good but an objective evil; (1) and when we say objective evil, we speak of evil which touches God Himself, Who is object by essence, and to Whom no evil can have access—in other words, we say what is an absurdity.

966. These objective, absolute, ontological conditions, therefore, which prescribe what ought to be the intrinsic order of being, that it may be a fit object for creation, are anterior to all others, immutable, dependent upon naught in creation itself, but on eternal truth alone. The Divine Goodness can do nothing for the advantage of man, except under these conditions, which become, on the other hand, conditions of man's happiness itself, because like every other intelligent being, he can only enjoy happiness through justice, and on condition that all the laws of justice have free course. They are, therefore, the conditions which were verified before all creation, which determine and qualify it, and on which depend alike

(1) The same is said by St. Augustine in this noble passage: *Nihil est infelicius felicitate peccantium qua pœnalis nutritur impunitas et mala voluntas velut hostis interior roboratur.* Ep. cxxxviii. 14.

the Providence of the universe as a whole, all creatures in general, and the Providence of each individual creature that forms part of it.

967. The third species of conditions which have their foundations in Infinite Goodness, cannot regard the providence of individuals, because Infinite Goodness imports nothing but a tendency to produce the greatest good of the whole body obtained by the least possible means. They are fulfilled accordingly by that Providence which rules the universe as a whole, of which individual beings are but parts; and of this we have already treated at length.

968. The second species of the conditions of the divine mode of action remains. These are such as spring from the titles which the creature might have to require something from the Creator, titles founded in the ideal types of the creature itself, and these are the only conditions which regard the providence of individuals.

969. But on these titles, what is it the creature can pretend to claim from its Creator?

We must prescind here from what the creature might claim from his Creator on the title of a promise freely made to him, which promise belongs to the order of the Divine Bounty, and not to that of justice and equity, although the promise having been given, there arises a title of justice. What, then, can the creature pretend to by any title which he has in himself?

970. First of all, I may answer by the simple word *nothing*, because all that the creature has, even to its existence, and therefore also any titles that it may have, are gifts of its Creator. The question, therefore,

is reduced to this, has the Creator, in drawing it out of nothing, endowed the nature of the creature with any titles upon which it can demand aught from Him?

971. We must distinguish two kinds of things to which the exigence of the creature might extend: 1st, that which appertains to *real* being; 2nd, that which appertains to the *order of being*.

972. As regards *real being*, no creature has any right to demand it, as we have said, or to require more or less, and to assert the contrary is absurd; because this would be to suppose that the creature could have rights of some kind before it came into existence.

973. As regards the *order of being*, this is physical, intellectual, and moral. Now, physical and intellectual being can have no rights, because right is a moral thing. That God should create beings with a perfect physical order and a perfect intellectual order, belongs to His own perfections, and is one of the first species of conditions which we have called ontological; but this cannot be the object of *juridical claims* on the part of the creature, because the creature, in the intellectual and physical order, is not as yet a moral being, and has therefore no rights. In regard, however, to the moral order, the creature may in some sort demand:

1st. That the law of justice shall be observed towards him, namely, that eudemonological good shall be conjoined to ethical good, and eudemonological evil to ethical evil; (1)

(1) The *ethical order* therefore draws with it also the *intellectual* and *physical order*, because the good order of the physical and intellectual nature is what constitutes in great part eudemonological good. It must nevertheless be observed that the equilibrium between moral and eudemonological good may be obtained in many ways, and if it is obtained in any of these ways, the law of justice is observed. For example, God may permit

2ndly. That he shall not be created morally and personally defective: because *personal moral evil* is an evil so great as not to be compensated by the good of the physical and intellectual existence which belongs to *nature*, and therefore in this case he would have received from his Creator more evil than good, and the Creator would thus seem to be a malevolent and not a beneficent being;

3rdly. That, for the same reason, the Creator, after having created him, shall not by any act of omnipotence despoil him of moral good, and produce in him the disorder of personal moral evil;

4thly. Nor create him so disordered, that, though

a physical evil to befal a just man, he giving his consent thereto, as He permitted that Christ should be crucified; and afterwards He may restore the equilibrium with such a weight of eudemonological good as shall compensate for the ill suffered and equal the merit of Him who suffers the evil, as is the case in the glory of Jesus Christ; because it suffices that the equilibrium between the moral and eudemonological good be verified in the sum total of the whole series of good and evil, of which that man is the subject. To restore this equilibrium between moral and eudemonological good, notwithstanding the momentary irregularity, is the work of Omnipotence; and therefore Job exalts the greatness of God for this very reason, that He can so order that the just man should suffer for a time without any injustice on the part of God, which appears absurd, yet is not so but only marvellous. "And if He should hear me when I call, I should not believe that He had heard my voice. For He shall crush me in a whirl-wind and multiply my wounds even without cause." (Job ix. 16, 17.) As if he had said: "he strikes me without cause, that is, without any fault on my part, and it seems as if He had not heard my voice, yet nevertheless He heareth me, because He holds in preparation for me an abundant compensation for all my ills, and therefore, is He always just but in a way that is sublime, and, as it were, incomprehensible to men who judge by appearances." Hence "if strength be demanded, he is most strong: if equity of judgment, no man dare bear witness for me" (*Ibid.* 19). All comes to what Christ said to His disciples: "Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom" (Luke xii. 32.).

personally good, he be obliged necessarily to fall into moral evil through the impotence of his nature, because such moral evil must once more be imputed to his Creator, as its true author.

974. We may call these, in some sense, four rights, which the intelligent-moral creature has in relation to his Creator. Yet, properly speaking, they are not rights, but rather ontological conditions, which even before the created nature—inasmuch as it partakes of the order of being—demands them, are already willed and demanded by the very order of being which exists in God. They cannot, therefore, be in any way violated by the Creator; because their violation would involve the destruction of being itself, that is to say, of God.

975. A fifth exigence may be added to the preceding, not indeed as having the title of right, but as equitable and fitting; and it is that the intelligent creature constituted by God in a state of moral rectitude should be capable of preserving it, and not be subject to the necessity of sinning through any seduction or invincible temptation on the part of other malevolent creatures. It is true that even should this happen, the evil produced by the tempter, or, through the natural weakness of the creature tempted, could not be imputed to God. But this is repugnant to the honour of God Himself, Who is the natural guardian and defender of His innocent creatures, and therefore it is a condition which forms part of or is very nearly allied to the first.

976. Now, all these five conditions are completely fulfilled by God in regard to each individual man. Therefore no individual can complain of Him: on

the contrary, each ought to have the greatest gratitude for that nature which was potentially given him in the first father of the human race, who came forth from the hands of God in the state of innocence, and raised to the supernatual order by that infinite and gratuitous gift which was not included in the nature of man or in the intrinsic order of man's nature. For, if our first parent sinned, this sin did not come from God, from Whom came only liberty and the power not to sin, and also the warning of the evil that he would incur by sinning; which warning was, moreover, a free gift not due to him, but conferred on him by the mere Goodness of God. Nor have we yet come to the end of the praises due to the Divine Bounty from each individual of the human race; on the contrary, how many are the other beneficent and gratuitous acts of Providence which God has wrought and still works in regard to each individual of the human race! It would be impossible to enumerate them all; enough for our purpose to mention only a few. Reverting again to the first, let us consider in addition the others that follow, each of which would suffice by itself alone to demonstrate that truth of faith that God "wills all men to be saved;" (1) and wills this not as a mere idle wish, but with a most sincere desire which makes Him provide most truly the means which would suffice if only mankind had used and would make use of them, for the sanctification and beatitude of the whole race.

977. *First Providence*, by which God made it possible for each individual man to be saved. God having created and constituted in a state of original justice the heads of the human race, this, as I have

(1) 1 Tim. ii. 4.

pointed out, ought to have passed as an inheritance to all their posterity, had it not been lost by the free-will of our first parents; and thus in this first institution was given to all and each of their descendants, the secure and easy means of being always good and happy.

978. *Second Providence*, by which God made it possible for every single man to be saved. It is certain also, that after the fall of Adam, God, Who had been offended, far from abandoning human nature to itself, promised gratuitously to disobedient man a Redeemer, to which promise was annexed the grace of salvation by the way of *faith*. This promise might and should have passed to his posterity; and thus was given once more to each individual man a means which was perfectly gratuitous of escaping from the universal deluge of eternal perdition. But men of their own free-will neglected His second mercy as well, and the fathers took but little care to instruct their children therein, for which cause God had, by the exemplary chastisement of the universal deluge, to destroy the corrupt generations who would have handed down to their posterity their inheritance of vice and corruption, not the saving gift received from God. Nevertheless, up to the deluge, the *revelation* of the future Messiah consigned to patriarchs, whose lives were so prolonged, could not have perished, since Noe must have been for many years a contemporary of men who had, for many years, conversed with Adam himself.

979. *Third Providence*, by which God made it possible for each individual man to be saved. God then made Noe the new head of the human race, and con-

signed to him the precious deposit of that promise which contained THE FAITH, which was the predestined means of salvation given once more to each and all of his descendants. All men, therefore, without exception, who lived before the coming of the Messias, would, according to the design of the Divine Goodness and Mercy, have been saved, if they had chosen to make use of that gift. But many, of their own free-will, for the third time rejected the proffered salvation, offering fresh outrage to that Infinite Goodness, which nevertheless willed all men to be saved; the result was that, having abandoned God, they fell into the worship of idols, losing sight of the pure light of revelation and of faith, and the grace annexed to it, and as St. Paul says: "They became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened." (1)

980. From these facts we learn that God, on His part, three separate times provided for the eternal salvation of each individual member of the human race. First, He created Adam, innocent and upright in all his faculties, and this was a moral-ontological necessity, or, if we will, a necessity of justice. Next, He gave the promise of a Redeemer, and this was an act of pure mercy; since the evil which befell the human race came from man himself, not from God, and God was not bound to heap on human nature other gifts which it could not in any way deserve, or to pardon the offender, or to come to the succour of one who was His enemy; man and his whole race would have perished justly, because by his own fault. How much greater, then, was the third act of mercy,

(1) Rom. i. 21.

when God restored the human race once more in the family of Noe! But after this, the human race again, of its own free-will, became perverted. What did God do then?

981. He discovered and made use of *new Providences*, by which He made it possible for each and every man to be saved. The first and second perversions were each the work of man; God, far from impelling him thereto, had given him every means to avoid them. God could refrain from placing any impediment in the way of what man, of his own free-will, elected to do, without doing any wrong to his creature. What was He to do? After He had respected all the moral exigences of His creatures; after having observed towards them all the congruities of justice and equity, after having provided for them superabundantly, perfect freedom of action was now left to God, and a boundless field was open to His Goodness; He was at liberty now to select what His own Infinite Goodness demanded, and it was due to Himself that He should so act; what was congruous in respect of individuals could no longer set limits to it: Goodness could tend directly to its own essential object, which is that of obtaining the maximum of good by the minimum of means; the lot of individuals became from that moment subordinated to the destiny of all, because even though some should be lost in the universal good, this would be owing to their own corruption which made them undeserving of all special provision. In this we may find the reason of the permission of sin; it was the Goodness of God itself that decreed the permission, that is to say, sin was permitted because only thus was Goodness left free to obtain

that most excellent end which the considerations of justice and equity towards individuals might have been an obstacle to, by hindering it from diffusing itself as widely as it would have wished. It is this which is said in the Book of Wisdom: "For if we sin, we are Thine," that is, we are become things of Thine which Thou mayest dispose of according to Thy pleasure, and "we come thus to know Thy greatness," that is, to experience the dominion which Thou hast acquired over us. (1)

982. But what does this mean? Is it perhaps that He has abandoned some individuals to total and irreparable perdition? Certainly not; only that He has divided amongst them His gifts according to the law of His Goodness. Undoubtedly, He uses His Goodness not to destroy but to benefit them, for as we read in Ecclesiasticus: "The mercy of man is towards his neighbour, but the mercy of God is over all flesh." (2) But He does this in different degrees, because He no longer owes anything to any man, having become the absolute master of His gifts. He therefore distributes them with that high wisdom which belongs to Him, in order that the sinful human race may come in the end to be disposed in all that beautiful gradation calculated

(1) *Etenim si peccaverimus tui sumus, scientes magnitudinem tuam.* —Wisd. xv. 2.

(2) The whole of this passage of Ecclesiasticus deserves profound consideration. It says that God is merciful to all precisely because He sees that all are corrupt and sinful: "He hath seen the presumption of their heart that it is wicked, and hath known their end for it is evil." What should we expect to be the sequel of these words? Perhaps that God will destroy all? Not so; hear on the contrary what follows in the Sacred Text: "Therefore hath He filled up His mercy in their favour, and hath shown them the way of justice." (Ecclesiasticus xviii. 10, 11.)

to produce the greatest possible amount of moral and eudemonological good, which is so much desired by His unlimited Goodness.

983. This perfect liberty in distributing his gifts acquired by God in consequence of sin, whereby all have equally become undeserving of every gift, produces another consequence which is in the highest degree congruous with the Divine government, and this is, that God is able to allow secondary causes to act freely according to the order imposed on them by His Wisdom; because even though through the action of these causes it should happen that some should die in sin, or remain deprived of some of His gifts, there would have been no injustice, they would have received all that was their due, and the Universal Goodness would have fully obtained its end, to which even these accidents would, as we have already seen, be made to tend, and all this without the intervention of any extraordinary and immediate action of God as the Law of the Least Means requires.

Let us see, then, the economy which God made use of in the distribution of His gifts, and how by skilfully directing the action of secondary causes He draws from human nature with most just and beneficent judgment all varieties of good that are possible.

984. He determined, as I have said, to send His Divine Word into the world, that becoming incarnate He might merit in very truth the title of *the Saviour of the world*, (1) or, as St. Paul says: "the Saviour of all men." (2) This is equivalent to saying that every

(1) 1 John iv. 14.

(2) 1 Tim. i. 1. In the Book of Wisdom, God is called *omnium Salvator*, "the Saviour of all" (xvi. 7).

individual of the human race who does not refuse His help is able to escape eternal punishment.

985. But the law of secondary causes, which it behoves universal Providence, as we have said, to maintain, might hinder the knowledge of the Saviour and the benefits of redemption from reaching some individuals.(1) On this point St. Alphonsus says: "God by His antecedent will desires that all men should be saved, and He has therefore given the universal means of salvation to all; these means, however, do not in some cases produce their effect, either by reason of the self-will of some who do not choose to avail themselves of them, or because others cannot make use of them owing to the action of secondary causes (such as the natural death of infants), the course of which causes God is not bound to hinder, since He has disposed the whole of events according to the just judgments of His general Providence."(2) What then did God do, to whom all and each of His creatures are most dear?

986. Amongst those whom the order of secondary causes prevents from gaining the universal benefit of redemption offered to all, such as those who, through the negligence of their parents, have never attained the knowledge of the Redeemer, or have died as infants without baptism, He distinguished with supreme justice and mercy two classes: one of those who are infected with *sin* only, such as original sin and

(1) *Verum, etsi ille pro omnibus mortuus est, non omnes tamen mortis ejus beneficium recipiunt, sed ii dumtaxat, quibus meritum passionis ejus communicatur.* "But although he died for all, yet not all receive the benefit of His death, but those only to whom the merit of His passion is communicated." Council of Trent. Ses. vi. De just. iii.

(2) *Del gran mezzo della preghiera* (p. II. c. I).

its consequences; (1) and the other of those who are laden with *guilt*, namely, with grievous sin by them freely committed.

987. These last who have personally and freely committed sin, whereas they had the power of avoiding it, and who have died in this sin, remain most justly in the hands of Supreme Justice, and are those who are lost without obtaining the reparation of redemption, because they chose not to receive it. This appears to be one of the conditions which we have termed ontological, which God cannot decline without going against the order of being and destroying Himself. The first, although not justified, God causes to experience many effects of His gratuitous and generous mercy.

988. The *culpable* sin of the second class of persons has its origin in their own soul, in their free-will; the sin of the first class, properly speaking, does not originate from the soul, but from the body, which they received contaminated in its very origin, and which inclines the soul to incur the guilt of voluntary transgression. (2)

The Redeemer willed to save the whole man, soul

(1) Let it be observed that these consequences do not of necessity drive man to hatred of God, or of truth, but only to a certain disorder in the love of creatures.

(2) St. Augustine writes thus against the Pelagians: *Unde igitur ira Dei super innocentiam parvuli nisi originalis* SORTE *et* SORDE *peccati?* "Whence then the wrath of God upon the innocent infant except through the lot and blot of original sin?" (Epist. cxciii. 4.) The words *sorte et sorde peccati* are used with great propriety; because the word *sorte* expresses the relation of the infant with Adam from whom it has fallen to its lot, as it were, to have to descend, and the word *sorde* expresses the intrinsic taint and the moral corruption of the soul, which constitute original sin, denied by those heretics.

and body; he had therefore to effect a *double regeneration*, that of the soul and that of the body.

And since *simple sin*, which draws its origin from the corruption of the body, was universal as regards the whole human race and inevitable, so that no act of free-will entered into it; God ordained that all men, since their sin was not an act of free-will, should be regenerated as to their body by means of the resurrection.

But since *culpable sin* comes from an act of the soul's free-will, He ordained that this sin should not be taken away, except by an act of the soul itself, equally free, by which it believed in the Redeemer and obeyed Him, and under the new law received, when this was possible, the laver of Baptism.

Thus, to those who have only the sin which comes from the body, this having been condemned to death, they receive through the merits and virtue of Christ a better body in the final resurrection: by which the soul is no longer harassed and inclined to evil. Hence, although they are not justified, but always under a debt by reason of the sin contracted in their past life, they are nevertheless exempted from sensible torments, and acquire an existence which brings contentment (1) by the pure gift of the Redeemer. What equity, what marvellous benignity of our God!

989. There is, therefore, for certain, one only means of justification for man, that which arises from the faith and from the baptism of the Redeemer. But the Divine Mercy extends so far, that they who, owing to the course of secondary causes, cannot have this means of justification, will nevertheless be saved

(1) See *Appendix* B.

from sensible torments, and have the enjoyment of natural good, provided they die free from all personal guilt; not because they have deserved this, but by reason of the human and compassionate affection entertained towards them by the God-Man, Who has received power over all others, His brethren according to the flesh.

990. How then is it that Divine Providence has disposed these same secondary causes, by which the knowledge of the Saviour is conveyed to many persons, and some die before it has reached them? How does He select those who shall receive it and those whom it does not reach? This we have already seen: it is always according to this law of His essential Goodness, which seeks the greater good, which greater good depends also in part on the *innate dispositions* of men, and especially on their being naturally conscious of their own insufficiency, and therefore ready to accept the help which comes to them from above.

991. Hence we must say with many Fathers and Doctors, that one who, though not a believer should lead a life in entire conformity with natural justice, would be aided by God. This appears to me all the more probable, inasmuch as it is manifest that in order to lead a life thus guiltless, man must certainly have been assisted by some actual and providential graces, disposing him to receive habitual and sanctifying grace. (1) Supposing this to be the case,

(1) St. Thomas having expressly taught that man cannot without the grace of God, avoid all mortal sins (S. p. I. IIæ., q. CIX., art. 8); and having, on the other hand, also admitted the hypothesis of a man who had no knowledge of the Redeemer, living in accordance with the precepts of natural justice, and to whom the gift of salvation would not be refused, perhaps even by

it appears certain that a man so favoured and assisted by God, could not be afterwards abandoned except through his own fault, since God never begins a work to leave it afterwards incomplete, neither does He repent of any of His gifts. This is especially the case if man performs works of mercy towards his neighbour, and if, under an impulse from on high, he gives himself to prayer; as we read in the case of the Centurion Cornelius. (1)

992. If, then, God does no injustice, but, on the contrary, shows mercy towards those individuals, who, owing to the limitation of secondary causes, however wisely ordered, do not attain to the knowledge of a Redeemer, or to whom it is not sufficiently promulgated, how much more does God do then in regard of those to whom He benignantly disposes that the good tidings of salvation shall be announced!

It seems indubitable that all those who were before Christ, to whom the promise of a future Redeemer was communicated, or even those who were able to conceive in their own minds the notion, the need, and

means of a miracle, it is clear that the Saint meant that to such a man would be given some internal extra-natural help, or some external providential disposition which would remove from him grievous occasions of sin; for it is only thus that the two apparently opposite doctrines can be reconciled. As regards the Hebrews, however, and the proselytes to their religion, they possessed a true faith and a grace in proportion, and the same may be said of those Gentiles who had preserved the faith in a future Messias, which would be in them a germ of special grace.

(1) Acts x. —St. Augustine distinguishes the graces which prepare man for justification, from the grace of justification itself and from those which follow it, in many places in his works, amongst others, when he says: *Spiritus ubi vult spirat: sed quod fatendum est, aliter adjuvat nondum inhabitans, aliter inhabitans. Nam nondum inhabitans adjuvat ut sint fideles, inhabitans, adjuvat jam fideles* (Epis. cxciv. 18).

the hope thereof, already possessed a principle of salvation, by co-operating with which they were able to arrive at justification. Thus the Redeemer was called the "Expectation of the nations;" and although the more explicit revelation and the Divine Word were entrusted to the Hebrew race, nevertheless, God had careful solicitude for other nations also, since all had been created in order that they might know Him and by giving glory to Him might attain salvation; (1) and then when in the course of time the primitive tradition of a Redeemer came to be obscured amongst the Gentile nations, God provided that the sacred Scriptures should be translated into the Greek language, and thus communicated to the Gentiles; since the Hebrew people, being enslaved to the Gentiles, shed amongst them the light of the true God; He ordained other means also in great number, by which it came to pass that the knowledge of the promised Redeemer was never even among the Gentiles entirely obliterated; and at the time when the Saviour actually appeared, we read that a rumour was current that at that particular period some great personage was to be expected who was to come from heaven for the salvation of the earth.

993. Still more must we believe that to all those to whom under the law of grace the Gospel is sufficiently announced, is also given grace sufficient for believ-

(1) God spake to His people thus: *Et Dominus elegit te hodie, ut sis ei populus peculiaris, sicut locutus est tibi, et custodias omnia præcepta illius et faciat te excelsiorem cunctis gentibus quas creavit in laudem, et nomen et gloriam suam.* Deut. xxvi. 13–19. "And the Lord hath chosen thee this day, to be His peculiar people, as He hath spoken to thee, and to keep all His commandments: and to make thee higher than all nations which He hath created to His own praise and name and glory."

ing, since the words of Christ "He that believeth not shall be condemned," (1) manifestly express a judicial sentence which implies guilt; but this would not be incurred unless together with the external word of the Gospel, grace was also given to enable men to receive it with faith. Hence to all hearers of the Gospel is "given power to be made the sons of God," (2) by which grace they may all attain to baptism, or at least to an efficacious desire of receiving it.

994. Since, therefore, by sin all the conditions of the second kind are abolished, namely, the rights or exigencies of the mere fitness of things, which the creature might have in regard of the Creator, so God, from the moment when He began to give of His free act to His sinful creatures some actual graces in order to dispose them for justification, gave back as it were to His creature a title upon which he has grounds to expect that, provided he does what lies in his power, the plenitude of mercy, the gift of justifying grace will be given to him. But this is no more than a title based upon the divine congruities which must belong to the action of God.

995. It is justification itself which afterwards places in the hands of the intelligent creature, so to speak, a juridical title. And so indubitable in fact is this, that those who by faith and baptism have received the grace of justification, can never more want the aids necessary for eternal salvation except it be through their own fault, since these are secured to them by the merits and by the prayer of Christ; (3) for, as St. Thomas observes, (4) the smallest particle of

(1) Mark xvi. 16.
(2) John i. 12.
(3) John xvii. 9, 29.
(4) S. p. iii., q. lxx. art. 4.

grace is sufficient to overcome all temptations; and as St. John says: "Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin," that is to say, is no longer subject to the necessity of sinning. Wherefore, it is never impossible for them that are justified to fulfil the commands of God, provided they pray, according to that which the Council of Trent has expressly defined, (1) and they have always the grace of prayer.

996. But what are we to say of the man who, even after he has received the gift of justification through faith and baptism, falls nevertheless into mortal guilt? Such a one, no doubt, has stripped himself once more of all the claims he had acquired on the Divine mercy, and has therefore entered again into the condition of those who are left to the mercy of God's Goodness, and of whom He disposes with supreme wisdom for the universal good by either abandoning them to justice or restoring them once more to the state of salvation. And this He does in great part by means of secondary causes, by the action of which it comes to pass that some are lost, through being struck by death while in a state of sin. If they are spared by death, space for repentance is granted to them because a perennial fountain of justice is open for them in the Sacrament of Penance, and they are able to obtain the grace which they require

(1) Si quis dixerit Dei præcepta homini etiam justificato et sub gratia constituto esse ad observandum impossibilia, anathema sit; Deus enim impossibilia non jubet, sed jubendo movet et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis, et adjuvat ut possis. (Sess. vi. De justif., can. xviii. c. ix.)

If any one shall say that the commandments of God are impossible of observance even by one who is justified and constituted under grace, let him be anathema. For God does not command what is impossible, but in commanding, He moves us both to do what we can, and to ask for what we can not, and aids us that we may be able.

through means of prayer, although they are unable to merit it.(1) Neither does it exceed the natural forces of man that he should have a natural displeasure at his sins; moreover, the Christian who sins, since he does not thereby lose the gift of faith and the character of baptism, can always, if he will, repent, moved by those truths of faith which he believes, and this may be called in some sense a repentance *ex motivo fidei*. Hence, also, he is able to conceive a desire of the grace of justification which brings him to the feet of the confessor. It seems also that on beginning his confession, God would confer upon him, if he had it not before, that grace of supernatural attrition, which is requisite as a preparation for the grace of the Sacrament, because to the confession of sins, there appears to be annexed, as to an integral part of the Sacrament, some grace disposing the penitent to justification. This is certain, however, in the case of those who come to the feet of the confessor under the supernatural impulse of actual grace. In like manner, the prayer of the sinful Christian has this advantage over that of the heathen, that since the Christian has not by losing grace thereby also lost the gift of faith, he can pray by the light of faith, in which case, as it seems to me, the assistance of actual grace perfecting his prayer will follow, if it did not precede it.

997. Whence we may conclude that all the individuals who compose the human race, but principally all Christians, if only they will it and live in hope, are in

(1) St. Augustine and St. Thomas agree in teaching that *orationem peccatoris* EX BONO NATURÆ DESIDERIO *procedentem Deus audit, ex pura misericordia*. S. Aug. In. Jo. Tract. lxxiii. S. Thom. S. p. II. IIæ., q. lxxxiii., art. xvi., and q. clxxviii., art. 2.

a condition in which their salvation is possible: since obduracy of heart is found in those only who no longer will to be saved or who despair, so that no one can say with truth: "I desire to be saved, but it is impossible." "That salvation which is the only true salvation," writes St. Augustine, "and which is promised with truth by this the only true religion, no one who was worthy ever missed, and whoever missed it was not worthy to obtain it;" (1) words which were never retracted by St. Augustine, but explained only, in the sense that no one is deserving of salvation through his own merits, but only by a grace from God. (2)

(1) *Salus religionis hujus, per quam solam veram salus vera veraciterque promittitur, nulli unquam defuit, qui dignus fuit, et cui defuit, dignus non fuit.* Ep. cii. Quest. ii.

(2) Retract. ii. xxxi; and again in the book De Prædest. SS. c. x. *Si discutiatur et quæratur unde quisque sit dignus, non desunt qui dicant voluntate humana: nos autem dicimus gratia vel prædestinatione divina.*

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

Quæ tamen misericordia et veritas ita sibi occurrunt, quia scriptum est: "Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11); *ut nec misericordia impediat veritatem, qua plectitur dignus, nec veritas misericordiam, qua liberatur indignus.*

(S. Aug. ad Sixtum. ep. cxciv.)

998. From all these things we must conclude that there exists a *twofold Providence*, the universal and the particular; and that each of these follows a law of its own.

Universal Providence follows the law of supreme goodness, which, if considered as to its mode of operation, receives the denomination of "the Law of the Least Means," treated of at length in this book.

The law, however, which is followed by the *particular Providence* is that of supreme justice, equity, congruity, and conformity with the other divine attributes, of which we have just spoken.

999. The conciliating and *harmonizing of these two Providences* and of their two laws, is what constitutes the perfection of the government of the world.

These two Providences and the two laws by which they are governed appear sometimes in opposition to one another; it seems as if the *particular* good were in conflict with the *universal*. The perfection of the divine government of the world consists, therefore, in maintaining all that justice, congruity and the divine

attributes demand in providing for each individual creature in particular, and at the same time, in disposing all things with such due measure and proportion and correspondence, that the good of individuals and the regard with which they are treated, far from impeding shall prove in effect most useful means and necessary elements for attaining the maximum of universal good. The universal good remains, therefore, the supreme object of all the divine government, and all things serve to this end.

1000. Now, admitting the two Providences, and the two different laws which guide them, we may affirm of Divine Providence, by which the Supreme Being disposes of men, propositions that seem contradictory, whereas in truth they are in marvellous agreement; so that the divine government, which in its operations brings the two laws into harmony one with the other, verifies in an unexpected and wonderful manner, each of the two series of propositions.

Of the Universal Providence it is written: "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?" (1) To it we may apply all those other innumerable passages in which the Scripture speaks of the supreme predestination of men, which is nothing else but the grand decree of the maximum of universal good.

But of the Particular Providence it is written: "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every one

(1) Rom. ix. 20, 21.

that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no respect of persons with God," (1) and again, "Behold, all souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, the same shall die," (2) and we may apply to it all those passages in which God describes Himself as a just and equitable judge, nay, even as one that treats with reverence all and each of His creatures.

1001. The means adopted for bringing the two orders of Providence into fullest harmony and agreement was, as has been said, the permission of wilful sin. By thus sinning, men deliberately renounce the benefit of God's particular Providence over them, and so leave His Infinite Goodness the fullest freedom to dispose of individuals whether in mercy or in justice, in such a way as shall best conduce to the greatest general good. St. Paul seems to say this in these words: "For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He may have mercy on all. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen." (3)

With these words I am fain to conclude my work. Far from having been so bold as to venture to search into the deep secrets of God, it has rather been my

(1) Rom. ii. 9–11. (2) Ezech. xviii. 4.
(3) Rom. xi. 32–36.

purpose to show that they are unsearchable. With this object I have called attention to those sublime laws which He observes most faithfully in the government of the universe, laws of which He alone comprehends the infinite breadth and vastness, and which He alone is able to apply. It has been my desire in doing so and my hope that I might thus aid men to refrain from all censure and complaint against the supremely good and wise Providence of God, and rather hushed in silent contemplation before it, to render every day new love and praise and blessing to

> "The Providence, that governeth the world,
> In depth of counsel by created ken
> Unfathomable." (1)

(1) Dante Par. xi. 28–30 (Cary's translation).

APPENDIX A.

APPENDIX A.

(What is here given as an Appendix on the Resurrection appeared originally as a note to no. 827.)

Let the reader take note that it would be an error to believe:—

1st. That the just after the resurrection will enjoy corporeal pleasures. To maintain this would be to fall into the heresy of the Millenarians, vigorously combated by St. Jerome and condemned by the Church. JESUS Christ has expressly declared: "When they shall rise again from the dead, they shall neither marry nor give in marriage, but ARE AS THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN." (Mark xii. 25.)

2ndly. That the just after the resurrection will live an animal life, a supposition excluded by the words of Christ just quoted, and by the state of the glorified body, which St. Paul calls *spiritual.* (1 Cor. xv. 44.)

3rdly. That earthly and material things will constitute the treasure of the just in glory, and that the abundance of these will be the reward of their virtue; for a spiritualized body has no longer need of such things, nor would they befit it, as St. Paul says: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

4thly. That the just, rising at first to an animal life, will, after some time, pass to the life of glory; this being contrary to the most explicit declarations of Holy Writ (Jo. v.—1 Cor. xv.—Matth. xxiv., xxv.—

Dan. xii.), which affirm that the just will rise in a glorious state.

5thly. That the universal and solemn judgment of the good and the wicked will not be simultaneous, this also being clearly stated in the Inspired Writings (Dan. xii.—Matth. xxiv., xxv.—Jo. v.)

6thly. That the bodies will take a considerable space of time to rise; for they (at least the bodies of the just) will rise in the twinkling of an eye, as is taught by St. Paul: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 52.)

7thly. Finally, it would also be an error to suppose that in the millennium, the ceremonial law of Moses will again come into force, as some have falsely opined; for that law, being merely figurative, has already been fulfilled and made void by the truth of the Law of Grace.

But putting aside these errors, the question about the time of the resurrection of the just and the reprobate has not been defined by the Church; and St. Jerome himself, who did not follow the opinion of those who maintained that the just will rise a thousand years and more before the wicked, writes thus: "Although we do not follow, we dare not condemn; because many men of authority in the Church, and many martyrs have affirmed this; let every one, then, abound in his own sense, and let all things be reserved to the judgment of the Lord." (Comm. on Jerem. xix.) Some theologians think this opinion very difficult to reconcile with those scriptural passages in which we are clearly told that the just shall rise "in the last day."

(Job. xix.—Jo. vi., xi.) But who does not know that the word *day* is often used in the Holy Scriptures as synonymous with *time?* "It is needless for me to mention," St. Augustine writes, "that it is customary in the Scriptures to say *day* or *hour*, meaning a *period of time*." (Epist. cxcvii. 2.) Hence we often read "in that day" (Ezech. xxxviii. 10, 18, 19; xxxix., 11), for "in that time," as the context indubitably shows. This is owing to the use so frequent in Scripture of determinate expressions of time for indeterminate. Accordingly, in other places of the Inspired Writings, facts are related, of which it is said that they will take place "in the last of days," and which, nevertheless, are manifestly such as could not belong to the last twenty-four hours of the world. Thus Jeremias, foretelling the return of the Jewish people from captivity, and still more properly, their conversion to the Gospel, of which that return was the symbol, says: "In the last of days *(in novissimo dierum)* you shall understand these things" (xxx. 24); and he immediately subjoins: "At that time, saith the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people" (xxxi. 1). Where by saying: "At that time," He evidently expresses in other words what He had signified immediately before by the phrase "in the last of days." The prophet Osee announces likewise that the Jews will be converted in "the last of days." "And they shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the last of days," *(in novissimo dierum)* (Os. iii. 5). Yet it is certain that the time when the Jews will enter the Church and revive the charity which has grown cold upon earth, will not be strictly the last day of the world.

Micheas employs the same phrase to indicate the time of the coming of the Messiah, and of the propagation of the Gospel: "And it will come to pass in the last of days *(in novissimo dierum)*, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared in the top of mountains, and high above the hills; and people shall flow to it," (Mich. iv. 1); where it is evident that by "the last of days," the Prophet understands the last age of the world, which is that of the Messiah, and embraces the whole period from His coming to the universal judgment. Hence the fathers divide the duration of the world into seven epochs, which seem to be symbolized in the six days of the creation, while the seventh day might not inappropriately be taken as signifying the time of the Law of Grace, in which Christ has given His peace to men, all who receive that peace being made by Him to enjoy, even on this earth, a certain repose which is a presage of the heavenly rest. As to this last, it seems fitly signified by the eighth day, namely, the Lord's own; for which reason the fathers have taken the number eight to signify consummate perfection. St. Ambrose says: "Many of the psalms are inscribed for the octave,"—for, as the octave is the perfection of our hope, even so is the octave the consummation of all virtues (Com. on St. Luke, Lib. v., c. vi.); on which account St. John calls the time of grace, not only the *last day* but the *last hour:* "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist cometh; even now there are become many Antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last hour" (1 Jo. ii. 18); here also making use of the word *hour* to signify a longer and indeterminate time. Wherefore St. Augustine, writ-

ing to Hesychius, speaks quite to our purpose, as follows: "But the period of a thousand years, supposing that the world must end with it, might all be designated as 'the last time,' or even the *last day*, because it is written: 'A thousand years in Thy sight are as yesterday' (Ps. lxxxix. 4); so that every thing which happens within those thousand years might be said to happen in the last time, or at *the last day*. For, as I have before observed, it is well, in order to understand this and many like expressions aright, to remember how the blessed evangelist John, said: 'This is the last hour.' What a long time has now passed since these words were spoken! Had we then been living, should we have imagined that the world would last so many years after, or rather should we not have believed that the Lord would come even while St. John was yet in the flesh? For He did not say, *it is the last time*, or *the last year*, or *month*, or *day*, but *it is the last hour*. Behold, how long this hour is, and yet He hath not lied, but must be understood to have used the word *hour* instead of *epoch*." (Ep. cxcix., 17.)

I cannot here unfold in detail the many weighty reasons which have induced me to prefer before all others, the interpretation I have given of this difficult passage of the Apocalypse. I shall therefore only add a few observations. St. Paul names the *last trumpet*, and says that at its first sound *the dead shall rise incorruptible*, namely, the just, for of the others he does not here speak, nay, he had said: "Every one in his own order: the first fruits Christ" (our Lord was the first to rise), "then they that are of Christ, who have believed in His coming." (1 Cor. xv. 23.) And later

on: "We shall all indeed rise again" (good and bad); "but we shall not all be changed," (the good only shall be changed into a glorious state); then continuing to speak of these last, he says: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible; and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) Now, the *last trumpet* is the seventh, as we gather from St. John (Didymus ap. Hier. Epist. ad Minerium et Alex.—Œcumen.—Theophylact.). But St. John says clearly that this trumpet of the seventh Angel continues its sound, not for one but for many days: "In the *days* of the voice of the seventh Angel" (Apoc. x. 7); and yet St. Paul says that the elect shall rise again at the first sound of the trumpet: "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again," the voice of the trumpet being prolonged for many days, that is, for a long time; whence we may conclude that the just shall rise long before the final judgment. Now, this regeneration of the just is also called by St. John the *consummation of the mystery of God;* and hence, wholly in accordance with St. Paul, he subjoins that the consummation of this mystery must take place at the beginning of the sound: "But in the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as He hath declared by His servants, the prophets." (Apoc. x. 7.) And to indicate that glorified bodies will no longer be subject to the law of time, he says: "Time shall be no longer." (*Ibid.* 6.) It is true that the words of St. Paul, *the dead shall rise again incorruptible,* are applied by some interpreters to *all* the dead, the reprobate included;

but this seems to me wholly at variance with the context of the discourse. Estius writes: "To this we must add, that the word *incorruption* is always taken by the Scriptures in a favourable sense, nor do they ever attribute it to the reprobate, but only to the elect; hence the interpretation of those who apply this passage to all the dead indiscriminately, and say that the reprobate also will rise incorruptible, inasmuch as they will not be subject to death, seems to me undeserving of approbation. (Comment. on this passage of St. Paul.) Nor do the words which follow, *and we shall be changed*, present any difficulty, for St. Paul distinguishes between those elect who shall have died before the coming of Christ, and those who will at that time be living (1 Thess. iv.); and he says that in both cases they will be glorified: "We who are alive, who remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who have slept." (*Ibid.* 14.) From these words, some, especially the Greeks, have opined that the just living on this earth at the time of Christ's coming, will not die, but pass straight from the present life to a life of glory, grounding their opinion upon those many codices which read: "We do not, indeed, all die, but we shall all be changed." Wherefore, St. Thomas, not altogether discarding this reading, says: "We might also, according to those who read, *We do not, indeed, all die, but we shall all be changed*, interpret thus: The dead shall rise incorruptible, that is to say, unto a state of incorruption; and we who are alive, although we shall not rise again, because we do not die, shall nevertheless be changed from a corruptible to an incorruptible state. And this seems to agree with the words of 1 Thess. ix.: *we*

who are alive, who remain, shall be taken up together with them, etc.; so that in either case the Apostle places himself among the living." (Com. on 1 Thess. iv.)

But in order to explain St. Paul, there is no necessity of exempting anyone from death. Thus St. Augustine, in his treatise *De Baptismo Parvulorum*, "To some (of the just), our Lord will in the end vouchsafe that, being changed on a sudden, they feel not death like other men." (See also Retract., Bk. II., ch. xxxiii.—Ep. cxciii., 9-11.) Some Greek interpreters also have observed, that according to the reading just referred to, St. Paul does not say that those who are living at the time of the coming of Christ "shall not die," but says that "they shall not sleep," a phrase which signifies that they shall not remain dead for any length of time. For example, Œcumenicus writes: "Others, on the contrary, maintain the Apostle's meaning to be, *ours will not be a long death, as though there were need of corruption and dissolution*," and shortly after: "The expression *we shall not all sleep*, must be taken to mean that we shall *not continue long in death*, nor be subject to burial and the dissolution of corruption. But they who are found living at that time will only experience a short death." (In 1 Cor. xv.)

The seventh angel of the Apocalypse would seem to represent Christ Himself. By the six that preceded were symbolized Pontiffs and Bishops; but this is no reason why an Archangel might not represent Christ, and act as His ambassador and the herald of His will, as we may gather from the words of St. Paul (1 Thess. iv. 15), where the trumpet is called "the trumpet of God," as implying something more than the six that preceded.

The same may be inferred also from that passage of St. John's Gospel where Christ says "that the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." Moreover, in that same place, our Blessed Lord speaks distinctly of the resurrection of the just, which begins spiritually in this life, *i.e.*, when they rise from the death of sin by receiving grace, which is the seed of the future resurrection of their bodies. Hence the resurrection of the just—the *mystery of God*—considered in general, began with the preaching of Christ, which gave life to their souls, and will be consummated in the raising up of their bodies: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." (Jo. v. 25.) Christ says: "They that hear shall live;" because here He speaks only of the good, who receive and keep His word. He says also, "the hour cometh," to indicate the future resurrection of their bodies; and He adds, "and now is," to indicate the resurrection of their souls which is the seed and title of that future resurrection, and which began with His first coming. Then, concerning the resurrection of all, both good and bad, He says: "Wonder not at this; for the hour cometh" (and this time He says not, "*and now is*"), "wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (Jo. v. 28, 29); from which, however, it does not necessarily follow that the two resurrections (viz., that of the good and that of the reprobate) will be simultaneous, but only that both will equally take place by virtue of the voice of the Son of God—signified by the

seventh trumpet—which sounds for a long time, according to St. John.

Let us also consider those passages in which Christ foretells the last things to come (Matth. xxiv.—Mark, xiii.—Luke xxi.). In these the Son of Man is clearly represented as coming some time before the last judgment. For it is said, that after the Gospel shall have been preached to all nations, which event St. Luke expresses by the words: "till the time of the nations be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24), and St. Matthew by the words: "and this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations" (Matth. xxiv. 14)—the signs in the heavens will appear: "And then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty" (Luke xxi. 27.—Matth. xxiv. 30.—Mark xiii. 26.) This coming in a cloud corresponds with that which St. John describes in the Apocalypse (xiv. 14): "And I saw, and behold a white cloud: and upon the cloud One sitting like the Son of Man." Now, the Gospel says that after this coming of the Son of Man in the cloud, the redemption of the just—viz., their final resurrection—*is near at hand:* "But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads; because your redemption is at hand" (Luke xxi. 28); whence it is clear that some time must pass still before the world comes to an end. This resurrection is more clearly expressed by St. Matthew and St. Mark. The first says: "And He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice: and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them" (Matth. xxiv. 31). The second says: "And then shall

He send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." (Mark xiii. 27.) Here both the Evangelists speak only of the just, without any allusion to the resurrection of the wicked; and it would seem that those just will in their glorified state occupy the region of the air, filling the space between heaven and earth, all which is in perfect conformity with what we read in the Apocalypse: "And they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Apoc. xx. 4)—which is the *consummation of the mystery of God* foretold as happening "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel" (*Ibid.* x. 7). In St. Luke's Gospel, Christ, after describing the coming of the Son of Man, admonishes us that then the kingdom of God *is at hand* (Luke xxi. 31); and the same is also expressed by the two other Evangelists (Mark xiii. 29).—(Matth. xxiv. 33). Hence this coming of the Saviour is like the leaves of the fig-tree, which portend the near ripening of the fruit (Matth. *Ibid.* 32.—Mark xiii. 28.—Luke xxi. 29, 30), and is not as yet therefore the end of things. St. Augustine admits it as certain that these places of the Gospel refer to a coming of the Son of Man anterior by some time to the judgment (Epist. cxcix. 41-45). For, after having quoted St. Luke xxi., 27-31, he reasons thus: "When He says, therefore, *When ye shall see these things come to pass*, what things can we understand, except those which He has mentioned before? But among these we also find: *and then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty.* Therefore, even when this shall be seen, the kingdom of God will not have arrived, but will be near at hand" (n. 42). After this

he observes that St. Mark and St. Matthew keep the same order in their narrative, and both assign to the coming of the Son of Man the same place in the order of events, that is, some time previous to the end of the world: "We find," he says, "that this order is maintained also by the two other Evangelists;" and then after quoting their words in full, he repeats the former observation by saying: *when ye shall see these things come to pass*, what does our Lord mean but the things of which He had already spoken? Amongst which there is also this: *and then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty: and then He will send forth His angels, and will gather together His elect.* Therefore that will not be the end, but the near approaching of the end (n. 43). And here, by way of objection, he asks whether the words *when ye shall see these things come to pass* may be understood as referring, not to all the things that had been said before, but only to some of them, so as to exclude the coming of the Son of Man: and he answers that this cannot be, because St. Matthew says expressly *all these things*, and consequently the *coming of Christ* also: "Are we perhaps to assert that where our Lord says, *when ye shall see these things come to pass*, He does not mean all the things He had said previously, but only some of them, that is to say, excepting what He had affirmed in reference to the *coming of the Son of Man*, etc., so that then the end will be, not near at hand, but actually arrived? But Matthew speaks in such a way as to leave no doubt that the expression *when ye shall see these things come to pass* includes without exception every thing which had been mentioned before. In fact, this Evangelist after having written

and the powers of heaven shall be moved, adds immediately: *and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty: and He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable. When the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that the summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see* ALL THESE THINGS, *know ye, that it is nigh even at the doors"* (n. 44).

Moved by these considerations, St. Augustine says that the coming of Christ described in these places may be understood in two ways, that is to say, either in a mystical sense—in which He continually comes in His Church—or in a literal sense—in which He will come visibly—in that glorified body with which He sits at the right hand of the Father (n. 41). But the Doctor of Hippo adds: "which of these interpretations should be preferred it is difficult to pronounce;" acknowledging, however, that the second is more natural. "But the more obvious sense is, that when we hear or read: *and then they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and majesty*, we take the words to signify His coming, not by means of the Church, but in His own person, when He shall come to judge the living and the dead" (n. 42). Such, indeed, is the common opinion of commentators; and the words *then they shall see*, and the whole context of the discourse seem clearly to favour it.

I shall, therefore, conclude with the sage admonition

of this great Father: "But these things" (namely, whether the Gospel refers to the mystical and daily coming of Christ, except in some few sentences which speak evidently of His manifest coming in the body) "must not be rashly affirmed, lest we should chance to meet other passages plainly contradictory; especially as in these obscurities of the inspired words, whereby it has pleased God to exercise our understandings, it happens not only that among those qualified to undertake the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, some are gifted with greater penetration than others, but also that the same interpreter at one time understands better than at another" (n. 45). With this spirit of moderation I also wish the reader to receive the opinion I have expressed. For, I am well aware that there are other interpretations of the texts which I have quoted; and if the one I have preferred seems to me the best, all things considered, I am, nevertheless, very willing to submit it to the judgment of the wise.

Printed at the Catholic Reformatory School, Market Weighton.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

10,685 214 R57
Rosmini, Antonio
AUTHOR
Theodicy
TITLE Vol. 2

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED